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DECENTRALIZATION OF EDUCATIONAL DECISION MAKING IN MALAWI

BY

CHRISTINA DORIS NSALIWA ©

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY STUDIES

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommended to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled: DECENTRALIZATION OF EDUCATIONAL DECISION MAKING IN MALAWI submitted by CHRISTINA DORIS NSALIWA in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION.

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Date: March 1, 1996.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late dad John Bright Chikusi Chirwa and my mum Mercy Nyang'oma Chirwa. I am truly blessed to have had the benefit of their unconditional care and love.

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the study was to examine changes in control of educational decision making in government secondary education within Malawi. Data were collected by means of a questionnaire and interviews. Documents were also examined. Respondents were senior administrators at ministry headquarters and regional education offices, and heads of government secondary schools.

Document examination and interviews indicated that pressures to decentralize the educational system originated from the World Bank and the government's own assessment of the inadequacy of highly centralized administration. The new policy proposed decentralization of most operational decisions pertaining to finance and budgeting, and student and personnel management.

Questionnaire responses revealed that a desire for efficiency in the administration of education, concern with the effectiveness of educational administration, the increased size of the Ministry of Education and Culture, and pressure from donors such as the World Bank had an important influence on the introduction and development of the more decentralized educational system.

At the time of the study in 1994, ministry headquarters was perceived to exercise major control over 21 of the 51 decision items researched, and heads of schools were seen to have major control over 16 of these. Respondents generally felt that heads of schools should have major control over 33 of the 51 items as opposed to the 16 that they were perceived to control. Respondents preferred that heads should have more control over the majority of items in most decision categories except capital expenditure, curriculum and instruction. The most significant changes in the locus of control were in the categories of finance and budgeting; equipment, supplies and services; and personnel management.

The study revealed that delegating decision making to those who have responsibility for implementing the decision and giving schools more authority to control educational resources were the two major benefits of the decentralization efforts. As regards potential problems of these efforts, the ministry not being ready, resource unavailability or insufficiency, lack of commitment by senior administrators, inadequate incentives, and reluctance to delegate were noted as the major ones. This study identified several implications for practice, theory and further research.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Control over educational decisions may be perceived as the power, authority and influence required to make an actual decision (Abbot & Caracheo, 1988; Bacharach, 1981; Simon, 1976). The degree of control over educational decision-making has been the subject of debate among political authorities as well as among professionals in educational administration. Evers (1990) pointed out that sometimes a hierarchical, centralized decision structure has been associated with efficient decision-making. However, he argued that "under certain defensible conditions, efficiency in educational decision-making can be enhanced by reductions in the concentration of organizational control" (p. 55).

Rondinelli, Middleton and Verspoor (1990) noted that during the past decade, a large number of decentralization schemes have been launched in developed countries. A number of governments in developing countries are also beginning to decentralize educational decision-making with the support of major international agencies such as the World Bank. This trend is attributed to dissatisfaction with highly centralized control.

Brown (1992, p. 2) stated that "the most often articulated goal of decentralization is the improvement of schools." A number of authors support this view and offer several advantages of decentralization such as flexibility, reduced overloads and congestion in the channels of administration and communication, more responsive decisions and empowerment consequences (Mankoe, 1992; Johnson, 1991; Brown, 1990; Rondinelli, et al., 1990; Caldwell & Spinks, 1988; Ewanyshyn, 1986). Caldwell and Spinks (1988, p. vii) argued that the time is right for many countries to decentralize:

> We believe that the values of effectiveness, efficiency, equity, liberty, choice and, indeed, excellence, are not mutually exclusive, and that the time is now at hand in many countries to bring about a shift in the centralization-decentralization continuum as far as management of education is concerned.

These comments illustrate some of the potential benefits of decentralization. However, Rondinelli, Nellis and Cheema (1984) warned that successful implementation of decentralization policies requires strong political and bureaucratic support, as well as attitudes and values within the organization which are conducive to decentralization.

The basic educational administrative structure in Malawi established under the Education Act created a highly centralized national system. All major decisions, both professional and managerial, were made by the senior officers at the Ministry of Education and Culture headquarters, located in Lilongwe, the capital city. However, since independence in 1964 the education system in Malawi has become larger and more complex. Bolman and Deal (1991) argued that as organizations grow, centralized decision making becomes more and more difficult. Unless growth is matched with corresponding alterations to the formal structures, problems inevitably arise. Recognition of widespread dissatisfaction with over-centralized planning and administration led to the emergence of the decentralization policy as a new thrust for more efficiency. Basically the idea was to keep central office relatively small and reorganize the educational system.

Background to the Problem

Traditionally in Malawi, provision of services, including education, is a function of both central and local government. Nationally, education policy is determined by elected Members of Parliament and carried out through officials at the Ministry of Education Science, and Technology (formerly known as Ministry of Education and Culture).

At the local level, the education service is administered by the Local Education Authorities (LEAs) or Local Education Boards (LEBs) which are the equivalent of school boards in the Canadian setting. Local Education Authorities are a subordinate committee of a particular local government district. Each district sets up its own education committee to run the LEA. At this level, local authorities can also introduce policies so long as they do not contravene national legislation.

In this context, central government not only provides and controls the funding, but determines through legislation and regulations to what extent LEAs may share in the governing process over education. Yet LEAs do exercise some measure of financial control in establishing a local supplementary requisition and carrying out other important responsibilities such as establishment and maintenance of primary schools.

Each school has a school committee comprising representatives of parents, the Ministry, and the community or communities being served by the school. The day-to-day control of the school is invested in the headmaster or headmistress who has an educational, rather than administrative, background.

Under the terms of the Malawi Education Act of 1968 (Section 3), the Minister of Education was granted total power and can give to LEAs and take away from them educational responsibility and functions. Hence, control over education in Malawi has largely been subject to the will of the Minister of Education. For decades, decisions and directives have been issued from the Ministry of Education Headquarters to Regional Education Offices (REOs), from the REOs to District Education Offices (DEOs) and from DEOs to primary (elementary) schools; or directly from headquarters to secondary and post secondary institutions.

Regional and district education officers served as representatives or delegates of the Minister in the region and district, and were responsible for the translation and implementation of national education policies.

Commenting on the rationale for adopting such a highly centralized system in other parts of the world, Weiler (1990, p. 436) stated that

> arguments for centralization appear in two forms: Centralization in the allocation of resources is supposed to (a) enhance equity by reducing or eliminating whatever disparities exist between different parts of the country in terms of resources and (b) increase effectiveness by utilizing economies of scale and allowing greater mobility of resources to where they are most needed.

For decades, in adopting the centralized education system, Malawi appears to have shared this rationale. However, the traditional pattern of control has faced a significant and radical development. The change came about because of bureaucratic problems identified by The World Bank during the appraisal of the first sector credit (an International Development Aid Education Project). Hence, as a part of the credit to the Government of Malawi, The World Bank provided a study of the management of the then Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC). The study was undertaken by Price Waterhouse, a London based management consultancy firm. In their report to the Government of Malawi, the consultants proposed an organizational review of the entire ministry. The review was carried out by the Management Services Division of the Department of Personnel Management and Training from May 1988 to March 1989. Its terms of reference included review of the MOEC and development of recommendations for the improvement of the organization of the Ministry. The review report included specific recommendations about decentralized management.

The process of decentralization in Malawi's educational system created a new type of control in education. Such changes in control over educational decisions reflect a shift in the distribution of power, authority and influence at different levels of the organization.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study, therefore, was to examine the perceptions of control over educational decision making in relation to government secondary education in Malawi. The study was designed to examine three major aspects of the basic problem:

1. The degrees of control which were exerted over decisions by organizational levels with respect to two periods of time, before the 1989/90 decentralization reform and at the time of the study in 1994;
2. The changes in the degree of control between the two periods of time;
3. The relationship between the perceived locus of actual and preferred control at the time of the study in 1994.

In addition, this study examined the origin, nature and objectives of the decentralization policy, perceived benefits and problems associated with the educational decentralization efforts in Malawi.

Specifically, the following questions guided this research:

1. What is the origin of educational decentralization in Malawi and what were the objectives and proposed nature of the decentralization efforts?

2. What factors influenced the introduction and development of more decentralized control over educational decisions and what differences exist between headquarters and field administrators with respect to these factors?

3. What is the perceived degree of actual control over educational decisions, exercised by five organizational levels before and after the 1989/90 decentralization reform?

4. What is the locus of preferred control over educational decisions by each of the five organizational levels and how is this related to the locus of actual control at the time of the study?

5. What changes in control do educational administrators perceive as having occurred as a result of more decentralization and what differences exist between headquarters and school administrators with respect to the perceived changes?

6. What are the perceptions of administrators of the extent of the benefits of the recent educational decentralization efforts and what differences are there between headquarters and school administrators with respect to these perceptions?

7. What are the perceptions of educational

administrators of the extent of problems associated with decentralization efforts and what differences are there between headquarters and school administrators with respect to these perceptions?

Significance of the Study

Over the past few decades, control of educational decision-making by a central authority (centralization) verses the dispersal of such power to lower levels within an organization (decentralization) have attracted the attention of many scholars (Mankoe, 1992; Johnson, 1991; Brown, 1990; Rondinelli, et al., 1990; Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 1989; Caldwell, Smilanich & Spinks, 1988; Ewanyshyn, 1986; Harman, 1985; Rondinelli et al., 1985; Bray, 1984; Hughes, 1977; Dessler, 1976; Carlisle, 1974). A review of the literature reveals that the trend appears to be swinging towards more decentralized policies since there is ample support for the idea that decentralized educational decision-making leads to educational improvement.

From a practical perspective, changes in control over educational decisions may have a significant effect on participation in educational decision making. Ewanyshyn (1986, p. 9) points out that

> For pragmatic reasons, therefore, it is important for the practising educational administrator to know about the degree of control over educational decisions being exercised at different organizational levels. Role conflict may arise if there is a wide discrepancy between an individual's perceived and preferred degree of

control.

This study is significant for a variety of reasons: primarily, because of the timing of the study, and the nature of the changes in control over educational decisions that are the focus of the study.

The timing of the study was considered significant in as much as the decentralization policy was still in the process of being implemented. Implementation began in 1990/91, although efforts to prepare for the implementation had been occurring at national, system, and in some cases, school level, since mid-1989. Thus, the timing of the study permits data concerning the perceptions of administrators at the different levels of the system to be examined while the perceptions are being formed.

From a macro-perspective, the study was timely in that decentralized management offers a different conceptual framework as compared with the previous system of public education in Malawi. Many initial questions arise out of the new system. When an educational system is said to be more decentralized, to what extent is it truly decentralized? Who is to exercise the devolved decision making power? Who should decide on what? Are people aware of the new roles they are supposed to assume? Has the decentralization process contributed significantly to changes in the locus of control over educational decisions? Are the students experiencing positive or negative effects? Clearly, the overall success or failure of this apparently radical change cannot be determined at such an early stage, but a preliminary study can provide insights for review purposes.

This study, believed to be the first since the recently adopted educational decentralization policy in Malawi, was intended to explore tentative answers to most of the above questions. Given the complexity of the issues involving educational reform, it is important to understand the views of the stakeholders about the recently decentralized educational system.

Apart from addressing a very important and timely educational issue, this study has both practical and theoretical significance.

Theoretical Significance

Most of what is written about centralization and decentralization of decision making is based on research from developed countries such as Canada, the United States, Australia, and England. Although these works offer concrete guidance for decision makers, the guidance appears to be contingent to specific circumstances such as the extent of the development of a country. This raises the issue of the relevance and appropriateness of application of this work in the context of a developing country. To some degree the study will test the relevance of the extant literature to a developing African country.

Due to the absence of a wide body of literature on control over educational decision making in developing countries, the development of new knowledge which is relevant to African countries is of obvious importance. This study has the potential to make a valuable contribution to theory development on centralization and decentralization from the perspective of a developing African country. It provides a foundation for theory and further research.

Practical Significance

The practical significance of this study relates to its potential for informing policy makers as to both the nature of the issues related to the implementation of the decentralization reform, and the implications of those issues for educational administrators. Such an endeavour was timely, because the reform had been adopted without a pilot program. This study provides a conceptual framework from which to identify concerns in formulating future educational policies in relation to control over decision making.

The results of this study are of potential interest to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in assessing the perceived impact of the decision to decentralize more decision functions to lower levels of the organization. This study provides information which can assist educational administrators in assessing whether the optimism reported and advantages articulated by scholars in developed countries are applicable in Malawi. The study should also be useful to administrators at different levels of the educational system in Malawi. A better understanding of the roles they are required to play in educational service delivery may help them become more effective.

The foci on the change process and on the benefits and problems which have been encountered in the implementation of the recent educational decentralization policy in Malawi adds to the significance of the study for administrators contemplating decentralization.

Explanation of Terms and Abbreviations

Centralization of control: is the tendency to shift power, authority and influence in decision making to the higher organizational levels.

Decentralization of control: is the tendency to shift power, authority and influence in decision making to the lower organizational levels.

Devolution: legal transfer of decision making powers to local bodies.

Deconcentration: delegation of some decision making authority to field units or extensions of central government power and improvement of supervision.

The locus of control: is the position or level where a decision is made.

The Ministry: the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) or Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC). MOEST is the new name which replaced MOEC. The two names will be used interchangeably.

Headmaster/Headmistress (HOS): the administrative head of a school, equivalent to a school principal in Canada.

Secondary Education: Secondary education in Malawi includes years nine to twelve of schooling (forms one to four).

Government School: a school wholly maintained by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology out of public funds.

DPMT: Department of Personnel Management and Training.

REO: Regional Education Offices (or officers).

Delimitations

This study is delimited to one developing country in Central Africa, Malawi. Specifically, the study was delimited to senior administrators at Headquarters, the three Regional Education Offices, and government secondary school headmasters and headmistresses. Classroom teachers, District education officers and assisted secondary schools heads are not included in the study. Other stakeholder groups such as parents, students, LEAs, school boards/committees are also excluded, although they have varying degrees of influence over educational decisions.

Central office administrators, Regional Education Officers, and government secondary school headmasters and headmistresses were selected for the study because they are in key positions to identify the locus of control over educational decisions, are knowledgeable and have considerable power and influence to bring about change. Secondly, all three groups hold formal authority and fulfil legal responsibilities in educational decision making.

Furthermore, this study was delimited to central office, regional education offices, and government secondary schools because of their overall involvement in the "initial phase" of the decentralization process and partly because of the researcher's background and interest. It was also considered important to delimit the study to a reasonable number of participants to permit ease of access and data collection. Lastly, data were gathered from more than one group for purposes of making comparison among various groups of educational personnel who are supposed to be affected by decentralization.

Limitations

The major limitations of this study include the following:

1. The study relied heavily on a questionnaire as a means of collecting data. Disadvantages of questionnaires include lack of depth in probing of responses; the researcher cannot tell if respondents misinterpret the questions and cannot readily offer clarification while the questionnaire is being answered; and return rates are not always the best.

2. The fixed item responses allow the respondent only a small range of responses, and involve a presupposition to some extent, on the researcher's part, about which aspects of a given issue are important to address.

3. The study relied on perceptions to measure the status quo. Although accurate measurement of perceptions would yield a reliable and valid representation of the actual structure, it is generally recognized that perceptions may sometimes be inaccurate and distorted.

4. The willingness of the participants to recall, articulate, and share their perceptions and experiences with the researcher.

5. The availability of documents relating to the decentralization policy: its origin, its development, the plan for its introduction and implementation.

6. The skills and knowledge of the researcher to develop and maintain an appropriate climate for the interviews, conduct interviews using open-ended questions, to analyze the data and convey the perceptions of the participants accurately.

Assumptions

Decentralization of educational decision making in Malawi had only been in effect for two to three years. Therefore, it was assumed that:

1. Some control over educational decisions was decentralized to lower levels of the organization as

stipulated in the decentralization policy.

2. The target population for the study was aware of the changes in control under the decentralization policy.

3. The participants would be willing to express their opinions freely in response to the questionnaire and interviews.

4. Respondents had perceptions about control of educational decisions or are in a position to formulate perceptions while completing the questionnaire or participating in the interview.

Organization of the Thesis

Chapter 1 of the thesis introduced the problem and presented a statement of the purpose of the study. In addition, the basic problem was identified and research questions were identified. The chapter also dealt with the significance, factors delimiting and limiting the study as well as assumptions underlying it. Chapter 2 provides some background information on Malawi. Chapter 3 provides the theoretical and research background to the study while Chapter 4 outlines the research methodology. The results of the study are presented in Chapters 5 through 8. Chapter 5 provides a background to the origins, objectives and proposed nature of educational decentralization efforts in Malawi. In Chapter 6 the analysis focuses on the patterns of control over educational decision making as perceived in 1994. Attention is on changes between two periods, before the 1989/90 decentralization reform and four years into the implementation of the reform (in 1994) and discrepancies in respondents' perceptions of the actual and preferred locus of control in 1994. Perceived benefits and problems of the decentralization efforts are analyzed in Chapters 7 and 8 respectively. The final chapter presents a summary of the study and conclusions of the findings. Then it discusses the implications of the findings and ends with the researcher's reflections on the study.

CHAPTER 2

MALAWI'S HISTORICAL AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

The purpose of this chapter is to provide some background information on Malawi. The section covers three major aspects: (a) brief geographical, historical and economic context; (b) educational development that has taken place; and (c) governance of education.

Brief Geographical, Historical and Economic Context

Malawi is a small country (900 km long, varying in width from 80 km to 160 km), lying between 9 degrees and 17 degrees latitudes south of the equator. It has an area of 118,428 square kilometres of which 20 percent is water. It is landlocked by Tanzania to the north and north-east, Mozambique to the east, the south and south-west, and Zambia to the west.

Formally called Nyasaland (land of the lake), Malawi was under a British Protectorate for 73 years, from 1891 to 1964. The country achieved independence in 1964 and became known as Malawi, subsequently joining the Commonwealth as a republic in 1966.

Administratively, Malawi has three regions, the northern, central and southern regions. According to the population census taken in 1987, total population was estimated at 7.9 million and growing at 3.2 percent per annum.

With respect to its economy, Malawi is essentially an agricultural country. From 1964 to 1989, agriculture contributed between 36 and 40 percent of the country's GDP. Its main export is tobacco which accounts for almost half of foreign exchange earnings. Other exports include sugar and tea. Tourism is rated fourth as a foreign exchange earner. From 1964 to 1978, Malawi experienced favourable economic developments, the GDP grew at an annual average of 5.5 percent. During the past 15 years, Malawi has had to contend with a series of external shocks: falling world prices for exports which has led to the drastic decline in tobacco prices in the world market; rapid escalation in import prices, particularly fuel and intermediate and capital goods; an escalation in regional political tensions which has disrupted external transport routes and led to large rises in transport costs and caused a large and continuing flow of Mozambican refugees to Malawi; drastic decline in the domestic production of tobacco due to periodically adverse weather conditions caused serious economic hardships. Consequently, the real rate of growth of the Malawian economy slowed down considerably. The decline in the national economy accompanied by high population growth rate affected to a very great extent the development of Malawi including the provision of basic social services such as education and health.

Brief Educational Development in Malawi

The history of formal education in Malawi can be divided into two main periods: (a) pre-independence and (b) post-independence.

Educational Developments in the Pre-Independence Period

Two types of formal education systems characterize the educational development during the pre-independence period. These systems were: (a) missionary education, and (b) colonial government education.

The Establishment of Missionary Education. During the colonial period, the history of formal education in Malawi was principally one of mission activity. From 1875, when the first school was opened, to 1929, education was a mission responsibility. There were no government schools in the country and African education was left completely in the hands of the missionaries. Besides the missionaries, some educated Africans, products of these mission schools, established their own schools between 1900 and 1926.

As in many parts of Africa, Christian missions considered schools to be an essential instrument for religious inculcation and propagation. In order to achieve their religious goals, the missionaries introduced reading, writing and some arithmetic to enable people to read the bible, hymnbooks and catechism. Intellectual aims of education were secondary, almost ignored. The need for intellectual pursuit became greatest as mission stations grew and required some categories of workers such as clerks, storekeepers, medical assistants and teachers.

By 1910 there were 1,051 mission schools in the country, mostly primary or village schools under the charge of African teachers, under the supervision of European superintendents from the headquarters of the mission in the country. However, because of very strong Christian influence that existed in Malawi, Muslims (who were in very small numbers at the time) did not send their children to these schools because they were afraid that they would be converted to Christianity.

Even though formal education was started as far back as 1875, by 1940 education was expanding at a very slow pace and there was no secondary education in the country. The first secondary school was opened in 1941 followed by two others in 1943. The three secondary schools were run by missionaries with a small grant-in-aid from the government.

Colonial Government Education. Although formal education remained a responsibility of the missionaries until 1929, the first contribution of public funds by the colonial government of Nyasaland toward education was in 1908. The Department of Education was established in 1926. Government control over education became obvious in 1927, when the first Education Ordinance was enacted. The basic structure for government and mission interaction was laid down in the Ordinance. The Education Ordinance provided for a Board of Education which was to act as the advisory body on all educational matters in the country and for the District School Committees which came into being in 1928.

The establishment of the Department of Education was followed by increased annual grants and some growth of education. However, limitation on government grants meant limitation on control and co-ordination which might have led to higher and more even standards. Concern for standards led to the establishment of a common syllabus by the Department of Education in the early 1940s. This meant that the missions were surrendering to government some control over education. In the sense that the Department of Education incorporated the mission efforts and reduced autonomy, its creation was a form of centralization.

Educational Developments in the Post-Independence Period

In 1961, the colonial government of Nyasaland was replaced by an elected government of Malawi. The Department of Education was changed to the Ministry of Education headed by a Minister. Education has been regarded as the catalyst that activates economic development in Malawi, as a means of raising the standard of living of the population. Hence, since independence in 1964, the development of education has been an integral part of a wider national policy. The policy has been to ensure that the sector meets the labor needs of the economy. This led to emphasis being placed on the expansion of secondary education from its then very low base of 3,100 students in 1962 and to the establishment of the University of Malawi in 1965. Broad goals for the education system as stipulated in the First Education Plan (1973-1980) gave priority to improve internal efficiency, more equitable distribution of educational opportunity, and continued expansion of secondary and higher education to meet the needs of the economy. Specific objectives to be achieved during the period were: (a) raising the gross enrollment ratio at primary level from 33.5 percent to 50 percent, and at the secondary level from 3 percent to about 15 percent; and (b) improving the quality of primary teacher education. During the First Education Plan period there was considerable expansion of education at all levels. Total enrollments grew at an annual rate of 5 percent between 1974 and 1984. In 1984, the gross enrollment ratio at the primary level was estimated at 64 percent but the secondary enrollment ratio was only 5 percent. Enrollment at the primary level increased from 899,459 in 1984/85 to 1,022,765 in 1986/87 (a growth rate of 4.4 percent per annum). Secondary school enrolment increased from 24,343 in 1984/85 to 26,183 in 1986/87 (2.5 percent per year). Between 1974 and 1981 enrollment at the University increased about 10 percent per annum and in the primary teacher training institutions, 38.4 percent per annum, while the increase in enrollment in technical education was about 7 percent (The World Bank, 1987).

In 1985, the Government of Malawi, recognizing the crises it faced in the education sector and in the macroeconomic situation, embarked on a program of education reform and improvement, within the context of the economic adjustments already underway. The reform package was expected to improve: (a) the quality of education; (b) access and equity; (c) efficiency; (d) resource allocation and mobilization; and (e) education management through decentralization of educational services and improvement in the planning process (The World Bank, 1989).

With regard to improved access to educational opportunities, the Government's objective was to ensure that by the end of the plan period 85 percent of the 6-13 year age group were enrolled in school. At the secondary level the objective was to provide places for 3.7 percent of the 14-17 year old cohort in 1994/95. University enrollment was to double to 4,000 by 1995.

Decentralizing the activities of the Ministry Headquarters; strengthening the inspectorate; reconstituting the National Advisory Council to include parents and non-educators; strengthening the planning function within the Ministry, regional and district planning; preparing a human resource development strategy were some of the required actions to improve management and planning.

Quality issues to be addressed included increasing the number of qualified teachers; increased school inputs; curriculum revision and development; expanded primary school inspectorate system; and revised test and measurement system to reflect the curriculum changes.

The government's Second Education Plan (1985/86 - 1994/95) reflects a shift in emphasis from issues of quantity and promoting equality to issues of quality and efficiency. The broad policy for education then became to develop an efficient and high quality education system.

Administration of Education

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) formerly known as the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) is entrusted with the responsibility to plan and administer education in Malawi under the Minister for Education. Until 1989/90, the ministry was divided into the following four departments under the general supervision of the Principal Secretary:

1. Department of Planning - responsible for planning of education at all levels; the identification, preparation, supervision and evaluation of education projects, policy studies and preparation of education statistics.
2. Department of Education Administration - responsible for administering all levels of formal education. Partial decentralization of education administration resulted from the creation of three regional education offices (REOs) and 28 district education offices (DEOs).
3. Department of Inspectorate and Examinations - responsible for the inspection and supervision of

secondary education, primary teacher training, technical and correspondence education, curriculum development, professional development of school teachers and college lecturers, preparation and publication of textbooks, coordinating primary school inspection and supervision.

4. Department of Accounts and Personnel - responsible for all accounts and personnel matters for all educational levels.

MOEST is responsible for all formal education and training in Malawi. This included primary, secondary and post secondary institutions such as the primary teacher training colleges, and technical colleges. It is also responsible for the non-formal system of secondary education (Malawi College of Distance Education, MCDE). In addition, MOEST has formal responsibility for the University of Malawi, Malawi Institute of Education (MIE), Malawi College of Accountancy (MCA) and the Malawi National Examination Board (MANEB), although in practice this responsibility is exercised through its membership in the management boards of such bodies. The traditional structure of the education system in Malawi was inherited from the colonial government. It is divided into four major levels: primary (standards 1-8) with a final Primary School Leaving Certificate (PSLC) examination at the end of the eight years; junior secondary (forms I-II) leading to a Junior Certificate of Education (JCE); senior secondary (forms III-IV) at the end of which students sit the Malawi Certificate of Education (MCE); and tertiary which includes 4-5 years of university education or two years of teacher training.

At the primary level, local communities are largely responsible for the physical facilities, while Government assists with teachers and teaching and learning materials. Secondary school are to a large extent government responsibility but church-affiliated non-government organizations play an important role.

In addition to general education, MOEST is also involved in technical and vocational education through the MOEST - operated Technical Colleges and the Polytechnic-based Board of Governors courses. These courses are jointly administered with the Ministry of Labour which is primarily responsible for meeting the private sector training needs.

Governance of Education

In making comparisons between Canada and Malawi, it is important to bear in mind that Malawi has two levels of government, national and local, not three (federal, provincial and local) as in Canada. The relationships between the national and local governments are similar to the relationships between provincial and local governments in Canada and bear little similarity to relationships between the federal and local governments. This is particularly true with respect to the education system.

Education is a government responsibility in Malawi.

All public money to be expended on education is voted by parliament. Traditionally, public education at primary and secondary school levels has been administered through the Ministry of Education. Therefore, the Minister of Education and other statutory authorities have the responsibility of deciding the essential features of educational policy and the government is accountable to the public for the well-being of the educational system.

The basic administrative structure of education in Malawi which was established under the Education Act of 1968 created a highly centralized national system. The highly centralized system did not emerge by accident. It reflected very legitimate concerns which included ensuring that the education system responded to national priorities. Hence, the ultimate responsibility for the promotion of education in Malawi rests with the Ministry of Education, headed by a cabinet Minister and assisted by the Principal Secretary, Deputy Secretaries and heads of the various departments.

The Ministry has regional offices which are headed by Regional Education Officers, assisted by two Deputy Regional Officers one in charge of the inspectorate and the other in-charge of educational administration. The regional offices are mostly responsible for the coordination of education activities in primary schools within the region.

At district level, the District Education Officer heads the district education office and works in conjunction with the District Inspector of Schools and the District Home

Economics Organized. The district education office, coordinates and monitors the implementation of primary education in the school district.

However, for decades, overall authority over educational decisions, both professional and managerial, has largely been subject to the will of the national office. Decisions and directives have been issued from the national office to regions, from the regions to the school districts and from the districts to primary schools; or from the national office direct to secondary and post secondary institutions. Regional and district administrators, and institutional administrators acted as agents of the Ministry of Education, implementing policies and decisions made by senior officers in the national office.

Secondary school education in Malawi falls under three categories - government, assisted, and private. Government secondary schools are those schools which are directly and wholly maintained by the Ministry of Education and Culture out of public funds. Assisted schools are maintained in whole or in part by grant-in-aid. They have religious affiliations with either the Catholic Church, or the Anglican church, or the Church of Central African Presbyterian. Each school has a board of governors set up by the Minister of Education to manage the school or group of assisted schools. The membership of the Board includes a representation of the MOEC, the proprietor or former proprietor, the parents of the students, or the community or communities served by the school or group of schools, and such bodies or organizations as may be agreed upon by the Minister and the proprietor (Laws of Malawi, 1968). Unlike their counterparts in government schools, heads of assisted schools control school finances. Private schools are the sole responsibility of the proprietors. However, the Education Act mandated the Ministry of Education and Culture to exercise supervision and control over major decisions such as instruction and establishment for all types of schools. This study focuses on government secondary schools because they are directly affected by the decentralization reform.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to provide background information on Malawi. The chapter presented a brief geographical, historical, and economic background, educational developments that have taken place to date and governance of education. In general, several policy changes and reforms have taken place particularly over the last thirty years. One of the most recent policy changes has been decentralizing the activities of the MOEST Headquarters which is the focus of this study.

CHAPTER 3

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter provides an overview of the theoretical and research background to the problem. The main focus of the study was control over educational decision making, in terms of its location (locus) and degree. As the central concept, control over educational decisions was defined as the power, authority and influence required to make an actual decision.

Although organization and decision making are not the main focus of the study, it is considered important to review the concepts, including decision making theories, in order to provide an understanding of some of the important contextual and situational factors related to centralization and decentralization.

To provide an appropriate background or context, first the concept of organizational structure is reviewed. Second, the nature and process of decision making are reviewed, followed by an overview of decision-making theories. Third, the terms centralization and decentralization are examined. Next, major factors contributing to centralization and decentralization of control over educational decision making are reviewed in order to understand the extent of justification. Then, trends in centralization and decentralization are examined to provide a framework within which Malawi's decentralization could be analyzed. Subsequently, a review of related research is presented. Finally, the historical and educational developments in Malawi are briefly reviewed in order to provide background within which the study will be conducted.

Organizational Structure

Most educational decision making occurs in an organizational context. A number of scholars have argued that in order to understand the decision making process it is important to consider the concept of organization: how organizations may be defined, how they function, make decisions, and structure themselves. Etzioni (1964, p. 3) defined organizations as "social units (or human groupings) deliberately constructed and reconstructed to seek specific goals." According to Bolman and Deal (1991), Etzioni (1964), and Mintzberg (1989), the organization's basic elements include:

1. Division of labour into various tasks to be performed.
2. Coordination of those tasks to accomplish the activity.

Coordination of different roles within the organization leads to the presence of one or more power centres which control the concerted efforts of the organization and direct them toward its goals. Ewanyshyn (1986) alluded to the fact that goal specification, power and control are key elements within an organization. Once an organization has defined its positions or roles, the next step is how to group the positions into some form of structure.

Mintzberg (1989, p. 100) defined structure as "the total of the ways in which an organization divides its labour into distinct tasks and then achieves coordination among them." Structure can play an important role in an organization's performance. Bolman and Deal (1991) noted that for every organizations, there is a formal structure that will work, but there are many others that will not. The challenge for an organization is to design and implement a structure that will fit its particular circumstances such as goals, strategies, environment, technology, and people.

Mintzberg (1979) offered five possible configurations which reflect the various ways in which organizations may be structured: simple structure, machine bureaucracy, divisionalized form, professional bureaucracy, and adhocracy. Each form creates a unique set of management challenges. However, Mintzberg (1989) emphasized that the success of an organization could be explained not by its use of any single organizational attributes (such as form of decentralization), but by how it interrelates various attributes.

Brown (1990) described briefly how the configurations may be applied to education. He concluded that four of the configurations; simple structure, machine bureaucracy, professional bureaucracy, and adhocracy do not match Canadian school district structure very well. Neither do they match the Malawian educational structure. As will be illustrated below, in the context of this study, the divisionalized form also appears to be most fitting. Hence, its structure and processes will be examined, along with its problems.

The Divisionalized Form

Mintzberg (1979) stated that organizations that fit the divisionalized configuration consist of semi-autonomous units or divisions coupled together by a central administrative structure (headquarters). The divisions serve specific market areas. They get considerable autonomy, but they are responsible for achieving certain measurable results.

The Ministry of Education and Culture in Malawi has aspects of the divisionalized structure. It has a headquarters in Lilongwe, the country's capital city, which exercises performance control. Coordination between headquarters and the divisions aims at standardization of output. This implies some direct supervision of the divisions. However, there is considerable delegation of authority from headquarters to the division managers.

The education system consists of a number of divisions, regional and district education offices, primary and secondary schools, although one of these is dependent on the other for the flow of students, teacher training colleges, and technical schools. Another indication of divisionalization is with the schools and colleges conceived as the units which are specialized by geography and to some extent by the kind of program offered. However, output measures are not used extensively as a means for school coordination (Brown, 1990).

Mintzberg's view of divisional administration is that the divisional managers are required to plan so that personnel direct their energies toward performance goals. He warns that divisionalization does not constitute decentralization; instead it constitutes delegation of considerable decision-making power to the hands of a few people - the market managers in the middle line, usually at the top of it - nothing more (1983, p. 104). This implies that most major corporations are only partialy decentralized. Levels of authority to make decisions within divisions are at the discretion of the unit managers.

Although divisions have considerable autonomy, central office retains specific kinds of control such as: management of the strategic portfolio so that it can change the divisions, products, and markets; allocation of overall resources; design of the performance control system; replacement of division managers; monitoring of division behaviour; and provision of certain support services (Mintzberg, 1979, p. 397).

He also argues that the divisional structure offers economies of scale, ample resources, and increasing strategic responsiveness. But it creates its own structural tensions which do not encourage innovation. For example, central office managers tend to favor tighter control over divisions, while divisional managers continually try to find ways to evade those controls. Hence, tensions between division managers and central office managers are prominent.

Brown (1990) commented that while Mintzberg claimed that the divisionalized structure is evident in school systems, school principals do not have the autonomy to deploy resources the way divisional managers do. He further noted that the principals' success is not dependent on their output (p. 30). Mintzberg (1979, p. 428) emphasized that public service agencies, such as schools, do not match the divisionalized structure for three main reasons: First, divisions are seldom divested in the public service. Second, divisional managers are usually given control over personnel selection, discipline, transfer and dismissal, a set of responsibilities seldom granted public service managers. Third, public agencies are unable to measure the attainment of their social goals. He emphatically warns that public agencies adopting the divisionalized structure have the following choices: abandon attempts at control (except for the appointment of socialized managers); contol using work process rules; or impose control using artificial objectives.

The divisionalized structure appears to partly describe the decentralized educational system in Malawi. Yet it departs considerably from the traditional educational structure where authority of lower levels to make decisions is concerned. However, it may be a potential for the improvement of the delivery of educational services if adopted by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Implications for Decision Making

To understand how decisions are actually made, we need knowledge about the organizational context and structure. Context sets the scene for decisions in terms of the environments in which decision making works, about individuals and groups as decision makers, and about the complexities of interpersonal and intergroup relations in decision making. Structure sets the scene in terms of rules for making decisions.

Decision making is obviously an important concept in studying organizations. According to Ewanyshyn (1986), organizational decision making may be described in various ways, depending on how an organization is viewed. He argues that some perspectives are more appropriate than others for explaining structure and processes in certain kinds of organizations. Viewing the organization as an open system provides a new philosophy of one's organization as well as a new viewpoint of oneself and one's role within the organization and the nation.

To identify points at which decisions are made is to take a big step toward understanding the nature of an organization (Boyan, 1988, p. 255).

Decision Making

As early as 1959, Griffiths proposed a theory that administration was decision making. He suggested that the central function of administration is directing and controlling the decision-making process. Griffiths argued that "all other functions of administration can best be interpreted in terms of the decision-making process" (p. 74-75). According to Owens (1991), "since mid-century, decision making has been widely recognized as being at the heart of organization and administration" (p.262). Simon (1976) suggested that the central problem for the organization is "how to organize to make decisions - that is, to process information" (p.292).

Since educational organizations, like all formal organizations, are basically decision-making structures, Hoy and Miskel (1982) proposed that an understanding of the decision-making process and models that can be used to explain decision-making is essential to successful educational administration.

The Nature of Decision Making

In the organizational context, Butler (1991) suggested that "a decision may be defined as the selection of a proposed course of action" (p. 42). However, the process of decision making does not end when a choice has been made. Simon (1976) argued that administration should be concerned with the processes of decision making as well as the processes of action. He suggested that the task of "deciding" pervades the entire administrative organization just as much as the task of "doing". In support of Simon, Hoy and Miskel (1982) viewed decision-making as a process by which decisions are not only arrived at, but implemented. They emphasized that "until decision making is converted into action, it is only good intention" (p.264).

Campbell, Corbally, and Nystrand (1983, p.109) categorized the decisions that face educational administrators as follows:

1. Institutional decisions - decisions related to the school and school district and to educational programs, e.g., implementation decisions.

2. Strategy decisions - decisions related to how instructional decisions will be implemented. An understanding of personal abilities; the abilities and attitudes of implementers; the environment of implementation; and the priorities and training considerations involved in the undertaking is very important when making strategy decisions. The authors emphasized the importance of strategy decisions - "unless they are made well, substantive decisions can not be converted into reality" (p. 109).

3. Decisions related to administrator behavior - related to administrators' personal response to strategy decisions.

Ewanyshyn (1986) categorized educational decisions as follows: (a) Finance and budgeting; (b) Capital expenditure; (c) Equipment, supplies and services; (d) Curriculum and Instruction; (e) Personnel management; (f) Student management; (g) Organizational structure; (h) Implementation of new programs; and (i) Policy making.

Decentralization means delegation of decision-making for certain types of educational decisions only. The central authority usually retains the responsibility for some other types of decision which are considered to be matters of national policy.

Process of Decision Making

Conway (1984) defined decision making as "any process wherein one or more actors determine a particular choice" (p. 19). As a process, decision making implies a set of activities. A number of writers have described the decision making process as a series of phases, rather than simply an act of choice (Dill, 1964; Simon, 1977; Vroom & Yetton, 1974). Generally, the phases of decision making may be summarized as follows:

1. Problem Formulation - involves environmental scanning for situations (problems) requiring decisions. Once the problem has been identified, it is described within the context and conditions of its boundaries;

2. Design activity - focuses on inventing, developing, and analyzing alternative solutions. This involves data collection and evaluation of alternative solutions;

3. Choice activity - encompasses the actual selection of a particular course of action from those available. Ewanyshyn (1986) acknowledged the fact that some solutions may involve undesirable consequences, compromises, adaptations or concessions may have to be made in the final choice; and

4. Implementation and review - The implementation phase of a decision is the action phase whereby a selected course of action is planned and required planning is carried out. Review involves testing the performance of the solution against predetermined expectations or past choices.

The foregoing analysis shows that the process of decision making is central to any organization, highly complex and critical. According to Ewanyshyn (1986), the context of determining how to organize in order to make decisions is as important as the decisions themselves.

Estler (1988) warned that "decision making processes in educational organization look and operate differently under different conditions" (p. 305). This is because different situations pose decision problems under different conditions. Therefore, review of the various theories which have been proposed to explain organizational decision making can enhance educational administrators' knowledge of decision making and provide useful implications for practice.

Decision Making Theories

In attempting to address the need for more knowledge about decision making, a number of models or approaches have been developed over the years to promote greater understanding of the process. These provide a theoretical basis for designing appropriate decision making structures. The following four decision making models are reviewed: rational-bureaucratic, participatory, political, and organized anarchy or garbage-can.

Rational-Bureaucratic

The rational-bureaucratic approach appears to be the predominant view of how decisions ought to be made (Butler, 1991). The model assumes that decision makers are highly alert, clear about their objectives; and decisions are the outcome of rational calculation to achieve goals within a highly integrated bureaucratic structure. Rational calculation involves meeting the following conditions (Estler, 1988, p. 307):

1. The specification of goals and objectives with a ranking based on organizational values (preferences).
2. Identification of possible alternatives.
3. Evaluation of the consequences of alternatives.
4. Choice based on goal optimization.

According to Estler (1988), the bureaucratic view assumes an organizational structure marked by task specialization, a formal control system, high integration with component parts contributing in separate ways to the achievement of organizational goals with decision making responsibility at the apex of the hierarchy, and a closed system buffered from the environment. She pointed out that the structural approach is often associated with the use of clear rules for organizational roles and behaviour, impersonality and activity that supports centralized decision making at the top of the hierarchy.

The rational-bureaucratic model has been criticized for a number of reasons. Lotto (1990) noted that the basis for the criticisms has been "the observed discrepancy between the real world of organizations and the reconstructed logic of the rational bureaucracy" (p. 31). The major criticism of the model lies in its underlying assumption that organizations make very rational decisions after a thorough exploration of all the available alternatives and weighing the possible outcomes of all these alternatives. According to Dunn (1981), "rationality is difficult to realize fully in most decision making settings" (p. 226). He argued that for choices to be rational they would have to meet the following conditions, which are described as the rational theory of decision making:

1. Identify a policy problem on which there is consensus among all relevant stakeholders.

2. Define and consistently rank all goals and objectives whose attainment would represent a resolution of

the problem.

3. Identify all policy alternatives that may contribute to the attainment of each goal and objective.

4. Forecast all consequences that will result from the selection of each alternative.

5. Compare each alternative in terms of its consequences for the attainment of each goal and objective.

6. Choose that alternative which maximizes the attainment of objectives.

However, Dunn (1981) argued that in reality policy choices seldom conform to the requirements of the rational theory of decision making. He further argued that the context or condition in an organizational setting are such that rarely are decisions simultaneously rational.

Hoy and Miskel (1982) also argued that complete rationality in decision making is virtually impossible for a number of reasons. First, it is not possible to consider all the alternatives because they are just too many options that do not come to mind. All the probable consequences for each alternative cannot be anticipated. Hence, authors such as Butler (1991), and Hoy and Miskel (1982) assert that due to limited knowledge, ability, or capacity to maximize the decision making process, administrators seek to satisfice rather than continuously search for the ideal solution.

Participatory Model

The participatory model assumes that decisions are the outcome of consensus among relevant participants to achieve shared goals. Consensus is based on shared goals and values, influence based on professional expertise and reason among participants. The model emphasizes communication and status equalization among participants. Based on the above assumptions, Estler (1988) suggested that participatory decision making processes are most applicable to professional organizations and professional work units within large organizations.

Unlike the rational-bureaucratic model, the participatory model emphasizes human processes as the means to achieve goal optimizing rather than the structure. Many writers such as Conway (1984) and Owens (1991) consider the degree of participation in decision-making to be an important indicator of effectiveness in educational organization. According to Owens (1991), participation is valued for better decisions which lead to increased productivity and the potential growth and development of the participants. He also suggested three factors for implementing participative processes in educational organizations: "(1) the need for an explicit decision-making process, (2) the nature of the problem to be solved or the issue to be decided, and (3) criteria for including people in the process" (p. 177).

Political Model

According to Butler (1991), "the political model of organizational decision making is based upon the idea that an organization is made up of a number of interests not necessarily sharing the same goals and often pursuing their own views of organizational effectiveness" (p. 51). Hence, Pfeffer and Salancik (1974) noted that the model acknowledges the existence of conflict among participants. Estler (1988) argued that the model "takes into account competing, and often equally legitimate, interests; formal and informal power; and the effect of the external environment on internal processes" (p. 310). Due to the plural nature of the interests, coupled with scarcity of resources, Morgan (1986) viewed bargaining among interest groups and building coalitions to maximize their separate goals as the basic processes producing decision.

In the views of Butler (1991) and Pfeffer & Salancik (1974), a political approach suggests that an organization is neither a rational decision-making mechanism nor a unitary whole but rather an arena in which various persons and groups participate.

The political view of decision making is prevalent in education due to the diversity of interest groups affiliated with public education. Hence, McGrath (1992) referred to decision making in public education as a pluralistic process that contributes to the politicization of educational administration.

Organized Anarchy Model

Cohen, March and Olsen (1972) defined organized anarchies as "organizations characterized by problematic preferences, unclear technology, and fluid participation" (p.1). The model addresses decision-making in organizations coping with ambiguity. Therefore, Estler (1988) and Lotto (1990) argued that decision-making under the organized anarchy model is the result of independent streams of problems, solutions, participants and choice opportunities at a given time. Lotto (1990) noted that organizations surrounded by ambiguity appear irrational despite their efforts to be rational. The model suggests that in an organized anarchy, any action is necessary to overcome the paralysis of indecision in the face of ambiguity and choices are made by flight or oversight (Dill, 1984).

According to Lotto (1990), the organized anarchy perspective has been criticized for "underscoring the importance of retrospective sensemaking - of interpreting history meaningfully such that participants will be able to define the nature of the organization and their role in it" (p. 58).

Owens (1991) noted that ambiguity and uncertainty are prevalent characteristics of educational organizations. Although most of the studies on organized anarchies and garbage can decision-making have focused on colleges and universities (Cohen et al., 1972; March & Olsen, 1976), the few studies done with schools "demonstrated the applicability of this perspective to elementary and secondary education as well" (Owen, 1991, p.58).

The above analysis on decision making provides useful insights. The four decision models identify different aspects and implications of decision making processes. However, Estler (1988) viewed the theories as "complementary in expanding the range of decision making processes and variables that they explain. In combination, they acknowledge a more sophisticated understanding of the complexity of educational decision making and its role in organizational life" (p.316).

Centralization and Decentralization

In order to provide an understanding of important contextual and situational factors related to centralization and decentralization a review of the concept of control is essential.

Control over educational decisions is defined as the power, authority and influence required to make an actual decision. According to Abbot and Caracheo (1988), the relationship between the terms power, authority, control, and influence has been rather vague because the terms have been used interchangeably. They defined power as the ability or capacity to exercise control over educational decisions, while authority refers to the legal or formal right to exercise control over decisions. Authority and prestige (personal elements or characteristics) are conceived as the only two sources of power. Influence, on the other hand, may be defined generally as an individual's or group's capacity to affect the behavior of another or others. In an attempt to distinguish between authority and influence, Bacharach (1981, p. 34) argued that

> Influence is conducted informally, whereas authority is conducted formally. Authority is the power to make final decision, influence is the power to guide decision makers. Thus the scope of authority is well-defined, the scope of influence is more amorphous.

Simon (1976, p. 125) elaborated the concept of authority in terms of decision making:

> "Authority" may be defined as the power to make decisions which guide the actions of another. It is a relationship between two individuals, one "superior," the other "subordinate." The superior frames and transmits decisions with the expectation that they will be accepted by the subordinate. The subordinate expects such decisions, and his conduct is determined by them.

Authority, therefore, can be viewed as the legitimate and normative power to make decisions which control the behavior of others, and to command obidience in order to accomplish organizational goals. For the purpose of this study, power and authority are considered essential ingredients of decision making.

The Nature of Decentralization

Structural centralization is when all the power rests at a single point in an organization. When power is dispersed among many individuals the structure is relatively decentralized. According to Mintzberg (1983) there are four major dimensions of decentralization: vertical, horizontal, selective, and parallel. Vertical decentralization involves the delegation of decision making formal power down the chain of authority, from the highest level to the lower levels of the organization. It involves line persons from the chief executive to the lowest subordinate and can be placed within any role in the line of authority. For example, the Ministry of Education in Malawi would be more vertically decentralized as the locus of authority progressed from the Ministry headquarters, regional education officers, district education officers, headmasters, to teachers (Brown, 1990).

Horizontal decentralization is the extent to which formal or informal power is dispersed out of the line of hierarchy to nonmanagers (staff managers, analysts or planners, support specialists, and operators or teachers). Informal power includes control over information gathering and advice giving to line managers and the execution of their choices, as opposed to the making and authorizing of these choices. For example, if the authority of subject specialists was shared with the Ministry headquarters, then the Ministry would be decentralized horizontally. Mintzberg (1983, p. 109) commented on informal expert power superimposed on a traditional authority structure that "to the extent that organization has need of specialized knowledge, notably because certain decisions are highly technical ones, certain experts attain considerable informal power."

Selective decentralization involves the dispersal of power over certain types of decisions to different places in the organization. The central authority usually retains the responsibility for some other types of decisions which are considered to be matters of national policy (Mintzberg, 1989). Mintzberg (1979) gave examples which included the possibility of retaining financial decisions at the highest level of the organization but moving production decisions to the first-line supervisors. Based on Mintzberg's example, the kinds of decisions which could be selectively dispersed to secondary schools and post secondary institutions in the Ministry of Education in Malawi include school level supplies, equipment, day-to day maintenance, utilities, methods of instruction, while decisions regarding capital expenditure, curriculum development, examinations could be retained by headquarters. Considering the current calibre of the people making decisions, primary schools may not be given the same amount of control.

On the other hand, parallel decentralization is defined as the dispersal of power over various decisions to the same place (Mintzberg, 1983). Brown (1990, p. 39) gave an example of parallel decentralization for schools which implied that "their authority to plan and make decisions would encompass a much greater proportion of the resources they typically consume."

Mintzberg (1989, p. 105) also defined pure decentralization as "where power is shared more or less equally by all members of the organization." But could an educational organization be purely decentralized? Minzberg (1979) admitted that "such vertical decentralization must always be somewhat selective. That is, some decision making power is always retained at the strategic apex" (p. 191).

An examination of the four dimensions proposed by Mintzberg, reveals that organizations can be both vertically and horizontally decentralized and use selective and parallel dispersal of authority at the same time.

Trends in Centralization and Decentralization

Centralization and decentralization refer both to the physical location of organizational facilities and to the extent to which decision making, authority and responsibility in the organization are concentrated or dispersed throughout the organization. In centralizing, governments at national, state or province, and local levels adopt a more powerful role in decision-making. In other words, decisions and authority are concentrated at one point or level (the top level) of the organization. According to Weiler (1989, p. 3), authority or power in education is exercised essentially in two ways: Through the regulation of behaviour, and through the allocation of resources (human, material and financial). In most cases the government and its agencies exercise this authority. Central offices, which may apply to national, provincial or local school jurisdiction, set educational standards in the form of curricular prescriptions or examination requirements, or both. Similarly, central office exercises authority over the allocation of resources through its budgetary authority, control as well as supply of human resources and of material resources such as land, space, equipment, teaching materials.

On the other hand, in decentralizing, major authorities for achieving set educational outcomes, including authority to make certain decisions are delegated to lower organizational levels (Caldwell, Smilanich & Spinks, 1988). Efforts to increase the autonomy of schools have differed in scope and nomenclature. In Canada, the initial focus in Edmonton was on the school budget, with the practice described as school-based budgeting. When other decision areas were added, school-site decision making became the preferred term. In England, the focus has been on decentralization of decisions related to the allocation of financial resources, the trend has been described as Local financial management. In Australia, the general term `devolution' describes the changes to the public administration of education. The changes have been aimed at encouraging the self-management of schools.

The general trend in all the above has been a shift of power to make certain kinds of decisions from a central authority. In all instances, there has been significant and consistent decentralization to the school level of authority to make decisions that relate to the deployment of financial resources. Other issues related to curriculum, personnel, and facilities have also been included. However, for control purposes the schools have to work within the legislation, policies and priorities determined by central office. Therefore, the schools would remain accountable to central office for the manner in which resources are deployed (Caldwell, Smilanich & Spinks, 1988).

Regardless of their perspective, most scholars emphasize that centralization and decentralization are best considered as opposites on a continuum whose poles cannot be attained in reality. As such, it is inappropriate to describe a system as centralized or decentralized. The use of relative terms such as "more" and "less" may be in order, especially for comparison purposes (Caldwell, 1977).

Prevailing Arguments for Decentralization

"Decentralization in the governance of educational systems has become a rather fashionable ingredient in policy statements across a wide variety of national and international agencies" (Weiler, 1989, p. ii). While a number of educational systems have adopted the concept for years, others are still in the process of deciding whether or not to decentralize. It is essential that a move to decentralize or not decentralize control over educational decision making be made only after carefully weighing the known pros and cons of such a move.

Rationales for Centralization. Evers (1990) pointed out that "it has been supposed that the mode of organization most likely to promote efficient decision-making is a hierarchical, centralized decision structure" (p. 55). According to Weiler (1990, p. 436), the rationale for centralized forms of decision-making in education appears to be remarkably similar across different systems. With regards to central allocation of resources, three main arguments appear to be prominent:

(1) To enhance equity by reducing or eliminating whatever disparities exist between different parts of the country in terms of resources. Review of the literature reveals that over the past century the major value driving public policy has been equity. Equitable educational policies recognize that not all school jurisdictions are the same and ensure that schools are treated fairly. However, government policy can not be designed just to achieve equity, that is, fairness in the distribution of resources. Instead, it must also take into consideration other often conflicting goals such as efficiency. Hence, governments try to adopt educational policies that ensure both equity and excellence.

(2) Central office purchase of large volumes of supplies, equipment, and books creates significant economies of scale, thus reducing the cost of purchase by unit.

(3) Centralized control allows greater mobility of resources to where they are most needed.

Where the regulatory aspect is concerned the general rationale advanced is the need for (4) standardization: A number of educational systems have standardized curricula, qualifications, and examinations so as to achieve a certain degree of homogeneity for the country as a whole. Chapman (1990) also noted that at its best regulation of institutional and individual behaviour promotes the reliable transmission and diffusion of directives. Hence, promoting consistency or uniformity in the implementation of centrally produced decisions. This may be particularly important with curriculum decisions in systems with standardized national or centralized testing and assessment.

Rationales for Decentralization. Decentralization may be proposed and supported as the most efficient means of achieving other objectives. This is based on the arguments that centralized systems are inefficient and frustrating to the lower level personnel; centralization creates barriers between specialized personnel at local levels who are responsible to different superiors; it creates passive conformity. Hence, it is seen as inhibiting rather than promoting educational improvement. A number of arguments are made for more decentralized educational structures. The arguments are based on the understanding that under certain conditions, efficiency in educational decision-making can be enhanced by reducing the concentration of organizational control. According to Winkler (1993), the popularity of decentralization is attributed to a wide variety of factors. The most often articulated arguments for decentralization include increase in flexibility of decision making; subsidiarity - the delegation of authority for decisions from central office to individuals affected by the decision; more accountability to central office, and increased productivity; enhancing participation, increasing efficiency, and making learning more relevant (Brown, 1990; Caldwell & Spinks, 1988; Chapman, 1990; Weiler, 1990).

Brown (1990) found that flexibility of decision making for schools had increased with decentralization. School administrators had the opportunity and flexibility to make the types of decisions which reflect their local educational needs and the ability to maximize student learning. The concept of flexibility means the capacity to change and capability of modification. Flexibility is also associated with quicker response to local situations. This implies that decisions made at the school level concerning deployment of resources are preferable to a system where people distant from the school are making such priorities. It is believed that decentralization allows the organization to respond quickly to local conditions. By empowering unit administrators to make decisions on-the-spot, lower levels of the educational system can provide better service. Brown (1990) also found that decisions made at higher level are more costly in terms of time and money. He argued that it takes time and money to transmit information, particularly when persons are not proximate. After all unit level administrators have the necessary information to make the decision. They only need to justify their choice.

Advocates of more decentralized systems also argue that national or regional levels cannot be fully responsive to local educational needs. Decentralization allows each school to be more responsive to its community; and provides greater opportunity for local stakeholders' involvement in decisions which directly affect their school.

The move towards a more decentralized system increases school principals' responsibility for the management of the finances, personnel, buildings and so on. This gives them more authority to control educational resources. Naturally, the principals would become directly accountable for the effective and efficient use of school resources.

Arguments related to increased productivity appear from two perspectives. One has to do with efficient use of resources while the other looks at the output. In relation to efficient use of resources, Brown (1990) commented that decentralization should not be seen as a vehicle to reduce costs. However, he found that the discretionary finances may be reduced a great deal by retrenchment in the school district. For example, decentralized control over finances enables lower level administrators or personnel to gain a greater awareness of costs which may lead to reduction in unnecessary costs. Cost may also be cut through down sizing of the central office since certain decisions will be delegated to lower levels. In terms of output, Brown found that decentralization was associated with increased parental and student satisfaction which may in turn be associated with staff satisfaction.

Another motivations for advocating more decentralization in education is to improve the efficiency in the management of the system. This claim appears to be based on two expectations:

(a) That greater decentralization will mobilize and generate resources that are not available under more centralized conditions. This pertains particularly to the local community. Since decentralized systems of educational governance involve a broad range of participants in the community, the community is expected to express a stronger commitment to education by generating resources for the school.

(b) That decentralized systems can utilize available resources more efficiently. It is important to note that in the short term decentralization may involve a certain loss of efficiency as a result of diminishing economies of scale; However, over the medium and the long term, it is hoped that the available resources will be used more wisely and efficiently.

Other advantages of decentralization include:

1. Fostering development of managerial skills among subordinates.
2. Facilitating improved controls and performance measures.
3. Motivating subordinates.
4. Freeing the top officials from routine administrative

matters, so that they can concentrate on the making of policy decisions.

Problems of Decentralization

More decentralized educational systems appear to be emerging as alternatives to more centralized traditional systems in relation to educational decision-making. The trend is attributed to the success stories from educational systems which have leaned more toward decentralization. In the context of the Sub-Saharan Africa, the trend may reflect a stage at which emphasis on issues of quality rather than increased access to education become appropriate.

However, despite the glowing picture that has been painted about decentralization or the motive for adopting a more decentralized policy, it is important to realize that the trend poses new administrative problems as the schools and other lower levels accept further responsibilities. Caldwell and Spinks (1988) identified potential problem areas related to resource allocation, availability of understandable, reliable and up-to-date information related to school accounts, categories of income and expenditure decisions to be delegated to schools.

Bray (1984) and Rondinelli (1983) also identified a number of other problems associated with decentralization:

1. Greater local autonomy implies variety. Variety can in itself be a considerable virtue. It can also, however, be a reflection of different standards of provision and

spasmodic attention to national policies.

2. Decentralized administrations may be more costly than centralized ones. There may be a need for a large number of administrators and frequently the central authorities resist the idea that they should contract their staffing to match an increase in the regions or districts.

3. Coordination becomes a major exercise especially when schools and other lower levels are permitted greater freedom of action.

4. Although decentralization may permit greater local involvement in decision making, it cannot be assumed that everybody is either able or willing to participate. Decentralization may mean that central autocracies are merely replaced by local ones.

Mankoe (1992), Bloomer (1991), Rondinelli, Middleton,& Verspoor, (1990), Blunt (1984), identified a number of obstacles to the success of decentralization in Africa:

1. Resource unavailability or insufficiency
2. Magnitude and suddenness of change
3. Lack of clear demarcation of functions and powers of the different levels of the organization.
4. Lack of commitment by senior administrators to the realities of decentralization.
5. Inadequate physical and organizational national infrastructures
6. Inadequate incentives provided for the employees to work efficiently for the public good.

7. Inability or unwillingness of local communities to participate in decision making.
8. Lack of a well-defined policy framework.
9. Lack of effective monitoring.
10. Lack of or inadequate training.

Related Research in Education

Research in educational administration has attempted to address issues related to decision making. General themes of study include the process of decision-making, participation in the process, control over decisions and information relevant to decision-making (Miklos, 1992). The issue of control over educational decision-making has been examined both directly (Ewanyshyn, 1986; March, 1981) and indirectly in terms of centralization/decentralization (Mankoe, 1992). The Ewanyshyn study is examined in some detail. The findings of other studies are highlighted.

The Ewanyshyn Study

The main purpose of Ewanyshyn's (1986) questionnaire study was to examine control over educational decisions as perceived by 32 trustees, 77 central office administrators and 64 principals in four urban school districts in Alberta. Ewanyshyn found that the principal's office, the superintendent's office and the school board were perceived to have major or shared control over most decision categories. The highest overall perceived degree of control over operational decisions was held by the principal's office. Teachers and provincial education department were perceived to have the least overall control.

Respondents felt that principals should have less control over the finance and budgeting category, but should have more control over capital expenditure and personnel management. It was also felt that the school board should have more control over the community relations category. Teachers should have more control over personnel management in terms of evaluation procedures, student management, and community relations, and should be involved in policy making and decision making. Provincial education departments should have less control over finance and budgeting, capital expenditure and equipment, supplies and services.

The findings indicated general acceptability of the status regarding curriculum and instruction, organizational structure and new programs. The greatest discrepancies between perceived actual and preferred degree of control over the categories of finance and budgeting, capital expenditure, personnel management and community relations. Economic issues were dominant areas of concern.

Overall, the results of the study indicated that there was a very high congruence between the actual and preferred loci of control over educational decisions. Trustees and administrators favoured greater decentralization of control over decisions in the categories of capital expenditure, equipment, supplies and services, and personnel management than was perceived to exist at the time of the study.

In examining factors influencing centralization or decentralization, Ewanyshyn found that two factors contributed to a moderate centralizing influence on educational decisions: education department policy and provincial legislation. Five factors contributed to a mild centralizing influence: pressure from the teachers' association, pressure for public accountability, the political climate at the time, pressure from the trustees' association, and the economic climate. Personal philosophy was the only factor that contributed to a mild decentralizing influence over educational decisions.

Two conclusions were drawn by Ewanyshyn:

1. That perceptions of the locus of control over educational decisions were congruent with the allocation of formal authority as specified by legislation, policies and regulations; and

2. That the distribution of control across organizational levels was characteristic of decision-making in the school districts studied.

Other Studies

Mankoe's (1992) study examined the operations of the Ghana's newly decentralized educational system. The purpose of the study was to determine the extent to which the set objectives of the decentralization system had been or were being achieved as perceived by district office administrators, headmasters, teachers, parents and community leaders.

Mankoe found discrepancies between stakeholders' actual and preferred levels of involvement in school decision making. Inadequate incentives and insufficient allocation of resources were perceived as the major problems, followed by the role of the community and lack of in-services. Major potential benefits of decentralization included development of skills and attitudes in specialized areas, and improved quality of programs.

Patterns of control over educational decisions affecting school districts in the four western provinces of Canada were examined by March (1981). He found that control over a majority of decision items was exercised at the following levels of the system: the school board, principal's and superintendent's office. Generally the school board had the highest degree of control over decision items such as finance, school construction, special programs, school closure, transportation, special education and community use of schools. However, the school board's control over curriculum outlines, selection of textbooks and student marks was very low. The principal's office had the highest control over decision items such as school expenditures, fund raising, school conduct and assessment, scheduling, parent advisory committee and duties of non-teaching staff. The superintendent's office had the highest control over the selection of teachers and principals, procedures for evaluating instruction, staffing and class size.

March also found that the education department had the highest degree of control over curriculum outlines, selection of textbooks, school building construction and programs. Teachers' control was highest only on determining final marks and high over student reporting and assessment and student conduct.

The political and economic climates were found to contribute toward centralization. As a school district increased in size the balance of control seemed to shift from the board to the administration and principals. Although the locus of control varied from item to item, control over a large majority of issues was perceived to be distributed among three levels of the system: school board, principal, and superintendent's office. Generally financial matters ranked highest on the list of items controlled by the school board. The principal's highest control was over matters related to pedagogy and school organization. Control by the superintendent's office was highest over administrative issues.

In summary, review of the research on control over educational decisions by Ewanyshyn (1986) and March (1981) indicated that the principal's office, the superintendent's office, and the school board were perceived to have major control over most decision categories. Teachers and the provincial education department were perceived to have the least overall control. The findings indicated that there was a high congruence between the perceived actual and preferred locus of control over decisions.

Considering that in Canada provincial governments are primarily responsible for education, the above findings showed that control over educational decisions seemed to reside at lower levels of the system. Hence, educational decision making can be viewed as decentralized to some extent. Advocates of decentralization in education identify involvement at the local level as the primary objective of decentralization. Considering the potential benefits of participative decision making, there is need for change in the way teachers and others within the school community are involved with decision making. However, participation alone is not enough; the nature of the participation is critical. Allowing teachers real decision making power, legitimized through the use of majority or consensus decision rules, might produce more commitment to and satisfaction with the decisions made. In Ewanyshyn's (1986) and March's (1981) studies, it appears principals assumed that, since they were held responsible for the consequences of decisions made, they had the right to make all important decisions. As a result, teachers had the least control over decisions. Griffiths (1959) emphasized that "decisioning in an organization is not a personal matter, and the effectiveness of decisions is not a product of the quality of decisions of any one person" (p. 113).

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In this chapter the research strategies of the study are described. The study is descriptive in nature. According to Palys (1992), descriptive research adequately represents the phenomenon of interest as it occurs in the population of interest. First, specific descriptions of data collection and development of the questionnaire are discussed. Next, validity including the pilot studies carried out prior to data collection and reliability of the questionnaire are discussed. Subsequently, a description of the participants is presented, followed by an outline of the methods of analysis of the data, ethical considerations and participant selection.

Data Collection

Data were collected through a questionnaire, interviews and review of relevant documents. The questionnaire was selected as a technique for gathering data because it offers a number of advantages over other techniques (Mankoe, 1992; Palys, 1992; Cohen & Manion, 1989; Ewanyshyn, 1986): objectivity, reasonable cost, anonymity, comprehensiveness, wide coverage, convenience, and ease of tabulation and analysis. However, a questionnaire has the main disadvantage of lack of depth in probing of responses. Therefore, interviews were conducted with selected respondents to supplement the questionnaire. Interviews allow in-depth probing and explanations.

Collecting and using documents as a source of data provides information about many aspects that cannot be elicited from a questionnaire or interviews. Documents can provide useful information about reform decisions and background, and implementation. Hence, relevant documents were analyzed in an attempt to determine the background to the policy and to identify the stipulated objectives and proposed nature of the reform. The documents were also used to clarify, elaborate, and validate data collected from questionnaires and during interviews.

Development of the Questionnaire

Since part of the aim was to gauge changes in the locus of control over decisions, respondents were asked to state their perceptions of the degree of control over specific decisions by individuals or organizational levels. A review of similar studies was conducted to determine the kinds and amount of data which might be gathered using a questionnaire (Ewanyshyn, 1986; Mankoe, 1992; March, 1981). Based on such information and the researcher's understanding of the educational system in Malawi, possible questionnaire items were developed. Following critical review of the developed items by the researcher and suggestions from specialists, decision items were selected for the questionnaire. Selection, or revision of an item was based on relevance, clarity and conciseness. Final selection and revision of items was carried out following two pilot studies.

The questionnaire was in six parts. Part one, consisted of items on the origin of the new decentralized educational reform in Malawi. Part two consisted of two sections. Section 1 measured perceptions of the degree of control exerted by different levels in the educational system over the following categories of decisions: (1) finance and budgeting; (2) capital expenditure; (3) equipment, supplies and services; (4) curriculum and instruction; (5) personnel management; (6) student management; (7) organizational structure; (8) community relations; and (9) policy making and decision making. Three main levels were identified, namely: ministry headquarters, regional education office, and school. A further subdivision was made at the school level between the head of the school who is seen as carrying an administrative role, the academic departments, and the teacher(s). The questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

An attempt was made to gauge changes in the locus of control, hence, participants were asked to state their perception of the degree of control exercised by individuals or organizational levels. Two estimations were requested. One was an estimate of the degree of control at the time of the study in 1994. The other estimate relates to the participants' recollection of the situation as it was before the decentralization reform. In addition, part two of the questionnaire asked respondents to indicate on a five-point Likert-type scale which individuals or organizational levels SHOULD exercise major control over the specified decision items.

Parts three and four focussed on the perceived benefits and problems associated with the recent decentralization efforts in Malawi. The questionnaire listed items based on benefits and problems that had been identified in the literature as well as the researcher's own experience of the system. Respondents were asked to indicate to what extent an issue was a benefit or problem. A five-point Likert-type scale ranging from "Not a problem to Major Problem" was used.

Part five solicited suggestions for enhancing the effectiveness of the decentralization policy in Malawi. The last part sought demographic data about respondents, including formal education, position, years in present position, years of administrative experience, and regarding the headmasters/headmistresses, the type and size of school.

Validity

The validity of a questionnaire as a research instrument refers to the extent to which the items effectively measure what they are supposed to measure (Eichelberger, 1989). The question of validity can be raised with regard to construct validity, content validity, and the predictiveness of a questionnaire. Mouly (1978) defined content validity as the extent to which the situations incorporated in the test are a representative sample of the characteristic it is designed to measure. On the other hand, construct validity "asks whether we are really measuring what we think we are measuring" (Palys, 1992, p.400). In other words it involves the logical relationship between the conceptual definition or the concept or phenomena being measured and the methods used to measure it (Mainali, 1985). In this study, the following criteria were followed to ensure content validity: each question is to be related to the problem under investigation, the overall topic is adequately covered, and the questions are clear and precise.

Pilot-test of Questionnaire

Three different steps were undertaken to establish the validity of the questionnaire. First, the draft of the questionnaire was reviewed by a departmental supervisory committee. On the basis of the committee members' comments and recommendations the questionnaire was revised.

Second, a pilot study was conducted involving a very small sample of international graduate students in the faculty of education at the University of Alberta (N=5). The participants were asked to complete the questionnaire and review it for clarity in instructions, ambiguous content of items, the appropriateness of the rating scales, and overlapping of meaning carried by items. A comments and recommendations sheet was provided for each participant's use. From their comments and recommendations, the draft questionnaire was revised.

Third, a pilot study like the one described above was conducted involving a very small sample of possible participants (N=4) consisting of methods advisors (formally known as inspector of schools) from headquarters. This enabled the researcher to gauge the appropriateness and relevance of the selected items. Methods advisors were selected for the exercise because of their close contact and familiarity with all levels involved as well as convenience for the researcher. Input was also sought through the Secretary for Education (equivalent to Deputy Minister in Canada) to ensure that pertinent items are not excluded from the study. Based on the comments and recommendations, appropriate changes were made to the questionnaire.

Both pilot studies provided important feedback about the format and content of the questionnaire. More specifically, they provided useful information about the questionnaire items as well as instructions which, in one or two instances, were somewhat unclear or open to different interpretations.

Reliability

Reliability or consistency refers to the extent to which a measuring device is consistent in measuring the same phenomenon over time (Palys, 1992). Three strategies commonly used in estimating the reliability of an instrument include: (1) test-retest (administer the same test to the same person or group on two occasions and correlate the paired scores); (2) equivalent-forms (alternate or parallel-form techniques used when it is probable that subjects will recall their responses to the test items); and (3) split-half (getting a measure of reliability from a single administration of one form of a test by using split-half procedure). Mouly (1978) argued that reliability or consistency of a questionnaire is difficult to establish. Thus he concluded that "ensuring validity might be a better investment of one's time and energy." As such, no statistical procedures were used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire developed for this study. However, two detailed pilot studies were built into the study to ensure the face validity of the instrument as far as possible.

Interview

Although the questionnaire was the primary data gathering technique, in-person interviews were used to supplement the questionnaire. Palys (1992, pp. 165-166) noted that many of the disadvantages of questionnaires are overcome by the interview. The benefits of the in-person interview over a questionnaire include: (1) higher response rate; (2) an opportunity to clarify ambiguities; and (3) an opportunity to ask "verbally stingy" respondents to elaborate further. An interview schedule outlining the areas to be probed was prepared. The interview schedules are meant to guide the collection of data. The interviews were semi-structured and evolved based on the data gathered from the questionnaire. The purpose of the interviews was to determine the participants' understanding and knowledge of the educational decentralization reform and its implications; their perceptions of the implementation and impact of the reform.

Interviews were conducted at the ministry headquarters, regional educational offices, and school levels. At the headquarters, interviews were held with senior administrators in the different departments or divisions of the ministry.

At the Ministry, interviews were held with representatives from each department (N=5). At the regional level, interviews were held with one regional education officer and one assistant regional education officer (N=6). At the school level, interviews were held with a random sample of secondary school headmasters/mistresses (N=6) (selection based on the size, type and location of the schools). The interviews were either audio-taped or hand recorded depending on what the participants felt comfortable with. During the interviews, perception checks were made on a regular basis to ensure that the information shared by the participants was correctly understood. After each interview, the tapes were replayed, and brief summaries of the salient features of the participants' responses were made. Where possible, the summaries of interview data were shared with the participants for correction of any misunderstandings or misinterpretations that may have been made and for further clarification.

Participants

The questionnaire was used to measure perceptions of the degree of control over educational decision making (in relation to government secondary schools) exerted by people at three levels of the educational system in Malawi. Therefore, participants of the study were all senior educational administrators at the Ministry of Education Science and Technology headquarters, regional education offices and headmasters and headmistresses of government secondary schools. Headmasters and headmistresses were selected on the basis that their schools represent day or boarding government secondary schools and that they had experience with both the traditional centralized and the decentralized systems.

A total of 39 educational administrators made up of 14 from headquarters, 3 from the REO and 22 heads of schools, willingly participated in the study which constituted 69.6 percent of the group contacted. Table 4.01 presents the distribution of respondents. The table shows the actual returns by number, percentage and positions of the three categories of respondents.

Participants for the study consisted of all top and middle level central office administrators involved in major decision making, all administrators and professional personnel at the three regional education offices; and all headmasters and headmistresses of government secondary schools who were familiar with both the centralized and decentralized systems.

Table 4.01

Distribution of Questionnaire Responses by Position

Level	Number Distributed	Number Returned	Return Rate(%)
MHQ Administrator	14	14	100
REO Administrator	6	3	50
Headmasters and Headmistresses	36	22	61
Total	56	39	69.6%

Administrators at the different levels were chosen as a target group because of their breadth of experience in the system and their expected ability to appreciate the full decision domain in relation to the recent decentralization policy. Secondary school headmasters and headmistresses were included because they engage in administrative activities. Since headmasters and headmistresses have always taken decisions direct from central office, they were in a position to observe changes in the locus of control over decision making as a result of the decentralization policy. Teachers were excluded because they were not directly affected by the policy. However, teachers' perceptions on the impact of decentralization could well form the basis of a follow-up study at a later date.

Distribution of the Questionnaire

Questionnaires were either distributed or mailed to all senior educational administrators at ministry headquarters, all senior administrators at the REOs and all heads of government secondary school. A covering letter, personally addressed to each participant, was enclosed with each questionnaire (Appendix B). Subsequently, a follow-up was conducted by means of telephone calls to participants who had not returned a questionnaire. In some cases, two telephone calls were made to the same individuals. Overall, verbal comments made by participants about the study were very positive. Several respondents requested a copy of the findings, when they eventually become available. However, a number of participants also indicated that the questionnaire was too long.

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

The distribution of demographic characteristics of participants are presented in Table 4.02. Organizational variables namely, position, years in present position, years of administrative and/or inspectorial experience, were examined. Heads were also asked for information regarding the type and enrolment of their schools. Two personal variables, including gender and formal education, were also examined.

Table 4.02

Distribution of Demographic Characteristics of Respondents by Group

	Total		HQ		REOs		Heads	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. Gender								
Female	8	21	2	14	2	67	4	18
Males	31	79	12	86	1	33	18	82
2. Formal Education								
Diploma	6	15	3	22	1	33	2	14
Bachelors	18	46	2	14	1	33	15	42
Masters	15	37	9	64	1	33	5	14
Doctorate	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3. Years in Position								
1 - 4	18	46	7	50	2	67	9	41
5 - 9	14	36	5	36	1	33	8	36
10 - 14	4	10	2	14	-	-	2	9
15 - 19	2	5	-	-	-	-	2	9
20+	1	3	-	-	-	-	1	5
4. Years of Administration								
1 - 4	5	13	-	-	-	-	5	23
5 - 9	12	31	3	21	-	-	9	41
10 - 14	10	27	6	43	1	33	3	14
15 - 19	8	21	2	14	1	33	5	23
20+	4	10	3	21	1	33	-	-

Of the 39 administrators who participated in the study, only 21 percent were females. Only 15 percent had diplomas or less; and almost 85 percent of the respondents had a bachelor's or master's degrees. 46 percent of the administrators had been in their position for one to four years. However, more than 85 percent of the administrators had more than five years of administrative and/or inspectorial experience. It is worth noting that at the time of the study, in 1994, the decentralization reform has been in effect for about four years. This implies that the majority of the respondents were familiar with both the traditional more centralized and the recent decentralization efforts. Hence, they were in a good position to form perceptions about control over decision making before and after the 1989/90 decentralization reform and note any changes that had occurred as a result of the decentralization efforts.

The number and percentage distribution of the type and enrolment for schools involved in the study are provided in Table 3.03. Of the government secondary schools involved in the study, 41% were boarding schools, whereas 59% were day schools. The number of students enrolled in schools for this study ranged from 200-950 for boarding schools and 160-1000 for day schools.

Table 4.03

Distribution of Schools by Type and Enrolment
(n=22)

	Number	Percentage	Enrolment Range
Boarding School	9	41	200 - 950
Day Schools	13	59	160 - 1000
Average Enrolment			529

Data Analysis

Three types of data were collected and studied. First, documents on decentralization were analyzed. Second, a questionnaire was administered. Third, in-person interviews were conducted with senior administrators at headquarters, regional offices, and a random sample of headmasters and headmistresses.

The questionnaire requested information in the following areas: origin of the educational decentralization reform, control over educational decisions affecting government secondary schools, perceived benefits and problems of the decentralization efforts, suggestions and demographics. Information pertaining to the origin, objectives, and nature of the proposed educational decentralization was mainly obtained from the DPMT review report and The World Bank staff appraisal reports (1st & 2nd education sector credit).

Data analysis occurred in four stages. The first focussed on two categories of data: (a) the origin, objectives and proposed nature of educational decentralization in Malawi as stipulated in the DPMT review report which was being used as an implementation guideline; and (b) responses relating to factors which may have influenced the introduction and development of more decentralized educational decision making in Malawi. This was followed by an analysis of the responses indicating the degree of control exerted over educational decisions at the time of the study in 1994 and before the decentralization reform. Then variations between the degree of control reported for the two periods were examined. Discrepancies in the respondents' overall perceptions of the actual and preferred locus of control for the individuals or level(s) are discussed. The next stage of analysis dealt with responses relating to benefits and problems associated with Malawi's efforts at decentralizing educational decision making. Data on suggestions for enhancing the effectiveness of the policy of decentralization were compiled and incorporated as suggestions for improvement.

Where possible, attempts were made to examine the responses of all the respondents as a single group as well as to look for differences in responses between two main levels (headquarters and school administrators). The differences between the two groups were reflected by the difference between the means of the two groups. The middle level, the REO, was not included because there were too few respondents to warrant a separate group for comparison purposes.

Most of the information on the origin, objectives and proposed nature of the recent decentralization reform in Malawi was obtained from official documents. The information was used to provide a background to educational decentralization in Malawi. The questionnaires sought information in six areas.

Part A. Factors that influenced decentralization

Part B. Control over decision making

Part C. Perceived benefits of the decentralization efforts

Part D. Perceived problems associated with the decentralization efforts

Part E. Suggestions

Part F. Demographic information

With the exception of the last questions in Parts C and D of the questionnaire and Part E, the rest of the questions were close ended. Analyses were then made through the use of means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages. Since the study used a total population, there was no need to use inferential statistics.

Data from document and questionnaire analyses were used as a basis for identifying questions that require further clarification and validation, and for identifying gaps in the researcher's understanding. Hence, the direction and focus of the interviews was not only shaped by the research questions, but also by the issues that emerged during the preliminary analysis of document and questionnaire data.

With regard to interviews, all responses to various questions were carefully compiled and categorized according to respondents' positions. The predominant views for each question in each category were then extracted. These views were reported when appropriate during the discussion of the analysis of the questionnaire data.

Ethical Considerations

In accordance with the requirements outlined in the document titled University Standards for the Protection of Human Research Participants (1991), questionnaire respondents and interviewees were provided with the following information:

(a) an explanation of the study's purpose and process;

(b) that participation was voluntary and that participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time;

(c) that participants should not disclose their names at any point in the study;

(d) that all information collected during the research was to be treated as confidential and analyzed as a group, not individually;

(e) that all names, whether of persons or schools, were to be assigned pseudonyms to ensure anonymity; and

(f) that all data were to be kept in a secure location to which only the researcher had access.

This procedure was designed to ensure confidentiality and anonymity (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

Access

A letter was sent to the Secretary for Education in Malawi seeking permission to conduct the research study in the system (Appendix C). Having received provisional approval from the Secretary for Education (Appendix D), a copy of the final proposal and an outline of the proposed research providing the following information was sent to the ministry (Appendix E) for comments and final approval:

- the need for the study.
- the research design and data collection methods to be employed.
- the criteria for selecting secondary school heads to be involved in the study.
- the timeline for the study.
- the nature of the final report of the study.

Appendix F, is a letter of approval and support of the study from the Ministry.

Summary

Two main techniques were used to collect data from respondents: (a) a questionnaire, and (b) document analysis. Interviews were also conducted to supplement the main techniques. Two pilot studies were conducted in order to establish the validity of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed or mailed to all senior educational administrators at headquarters, REOs and government secondary schools. The questionnaire sought information in six areas: Factors that influenced decentralization; Control over decision making; Perceived benefits of the decentralization efforts; Perceived problems associated with the decentralization efforts; Suggestions; and Demographic information. Information obtained from document analysis provided a background to educational decentralization in Malawi.

Various methods of data analysis were used to summarize the information collected including: (a) comparison of means, (b) comparison of standard deviations, (c) comparison of percentages, (d) content analysis for suggestions made on the questionnaire. Since this was a study of a total population, therefore only descriptive statistics were necessary.

CHAPTER 5

BACKGROUND TO EDUCATIONAL DECENTRALIZATION IN MALAWI

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the context of educational decentralization in Malawi. The chapter addresses the following research questions of the study:

1. What is the origin of educational decentralization in Malawi and what were the objectives and proposed nature of the decentralization efforts?
2. What factors influenced the introduction and development of more decentralized control over educational decisions and what differences are between headquarters and field administrators with respect to these factors?

The Origin and Objectives of Educational Decentralization

The origin of the 1989/90 educational decentralization in Malawi can be traced back to the 1987 First Sector Credit Staff Appraisal Report (6th International Development Aid education project) by The World Bank. The report identified a number of problem areas and management issues. The problems were categorized as follows:

Management System. (a) Although Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) management had expanded since the early 1970s in response to rapid development in the educational system in Malawi; management practices, methods and procedures had not responded adequately to the needs of managing a developing education system; (b) Decision making processes were highly centralized at the Principal Secretary's level; and (c) Lack of effective horizontal linkage, coordination and communication.

Administrative Procedures. (a) Salaries of all educational staff, including field staff, were processed at headquarters. This caused delays in the payment of field staff salaries; and (b) All orders for permanent and consumable education equipment for primary and government day secondary schools were sent through MOEC headquarters.

Planning, Programming and Budgeting. (a) Lack of systematic linkage between education development plans, programs and budget; and (b) Need to involve district levels in the planning process with a mechanism for consolidating district plans.

Secondary School Inspection. Poorly performed inspection and supervision of secondary schools due to shortage of staff and inadequate transport support.

Staff Development and Incentives. Critical shortage of staff and skill capacity for planning, programming and budgeting staff development activities.

Keeping in view these problems, the World Bank put forward policy proposals that the educational system should adopt decentralized management. Among its recommendations, the World Bank provided a study of the management of the education system. As a result, in October, 1987, Price Waterhouse consultants of London were commissioned by the

Department of Personnel Management and Training (DPMT) in collaboration with MOEC to conduct a management study of the Ministry of Education and Culture. This exercise was part of the on-going civil service review sponsored by DPMT.

In March, 1988 the consultants submitted an Education Service Review (ESR) report to the Government of Malawi. Of all the subjects covered by the ESR, the Ministry's organization and management style received the most exhaustive and detailed attention. The ESR found several key problem areas: (a) excessive centralization and concentration of decision making - even for routine operational matters - at high Ministry levels in Lilongwe; (b) poorly defined work objectives, authority and responsibility at all levels; (c) excessive hierarchial layers; (d) a need to strengthen all aspects of career development.

The ESR proposed an organization for the Ministry substantially different from the traditional one. The principal feature of the proposed organization was decentralization: greatly enhanced authority and responsibility of the three regional offices and concentration of headquarters personnel on policy; overall planning, curriculum development, supervision of regional activities, and research and evaluation. The ESR recommended decentralization with three broad objectives: (a) to improve effectiveness and efficiency of the system; (b) to develop mechanisms for individual institutions to generate and manage their own resources; and (c) to enable practitioners to take initiatives and to respond to individual student needs. The report also proposed a detailed complementary review by internal consultants to cover organization and staffing of the entire Ministry of Education. The review team was to make recommendations on appropriate organization, staffing levels and grading to meet the need for decentralization of the Ministry.

The review was carried out by the Management Services Division in the DPMT, internal consultants to Government, from May 1988 to March 1989. Terms of reference for the review were to make recommendations for improvement of organization functions, organizational structures and staffing; and to suggest numbers and grades of personnel commensurate with the necessary work to be carried out in a decentralized organization.

The review team visited a large number of institutions in the Ministry including headquarters, regional and district education offices to examine the work that goes on and the decisions made. Data were collected through questionnaires, personal interviews, observation of staff at work, and document analysis. The findings and proposals were discussed in depth with management at all levels and their proposals, opinions and views sought and considered.

The final report recommended changes under the following main headings:

(a) Ministry of Education and Culture Headquarters.

(b) Inspection, Supervision and Methods Advisory Services.

(c) Education Institutions.

(d) Malawi College of Distance Education.

(e) The Department of Culture.

(f) Decentralization and Management.

(g) Grading and Career Progression.

Since the focus of this study is educational decentralization, in relation to government secondary schools, this account will examine only the proposed organizational structure for the Ministry; and recommended major changes in the mode of operation to go with decentralization.

Proposed Nature of Decentralization

MOEC Headquarters is responsible for management and development of the whole education system. The DPMT review, like the 1988 ESR, observed that one of the more serious impediments to progress in meeting the country's educational needs was the management of MOEC (Price Waterhouse, 1988). The DPMT review also described the education system as highly centralized. Highly centralized was characterized by the practice of high-level MOEC officials occupying themselves with routine and trivial issues, which left them no time to address policy or other matters of consequence. The review recognized that the organization and structure of the MOEC reflected the culture of the Ministry, and that effective change could be made only by changing the culture.

The report therefore recommended restructuring of the Ministry in order to enable wider decentralization which would ensure that most operational matters are dealt with at centres closer to the points of operation. The main objectives may be summarized as follows: (a) to improve efficiency of administration; and (b) to increase system effectiveness.

It was believed that if most operational matters were dealt with and related decisions taken at Regional, District and Institutional levels, it would release energies at the Ministry Headquarters (MHQ) to concentrate on the strategic issues that face the Ministry. Prior to this reform, due to over-centralization, the volume of operational issues dealt with at Headquarters consumed far too much of senior officers' valuable time and energy, and very little was resolved in the institutions where the services are rendered. This led to inefficiency.

After examining the work that goes on at the MHQ, and the decisions made, the review team strongly recommended that the Ministry ought to allocate budgets and most operational functions to Regional, District and Institutional levels and provide enough authority for decision making with clear guidelines and parameters so that MHQ should concentrate on the following activities:

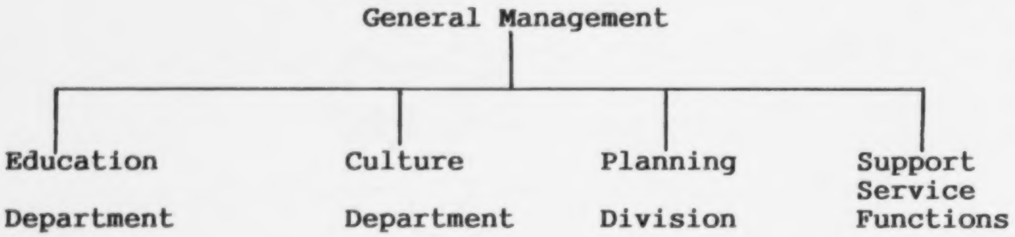
1. Formulating and reviewing policy.

2. Constructing and transmitting of organizational plans.
3. Co-ordinating the activities of the various education and cultural sectors.
4. Securing funding for the education and culture services and monitoring all expenditure.
5. Maintaining the framework of controls within which autonomy in decision making can be decentralized and monitoring the use of such autonomy and authority.
6. Collecting, collating and evaluating information and statistics for strategic planning.
7. Management of the organizational staff development programmes, and conditions of service.

DPMT recommended an improved organizational structure for the ministry headquarters. The proposed structure was based on the view that the organization required a reduction of layers and levels to shorten the chain of command, establishment of more realistic spans of management control and clear division between field operations and headquarters functions. As such the report also recommended major changes in modes of operation to go with the restructuring.

Ministry Headquarters Functions

All in all, the review team subscribed to the view that the organization required a reduction of layers and levels to shorten the chain of command, the reduction of "one over one" reporting lines, establishment of more realistic spans of management control and clear division between field operations and headquarters functions. Therefore, the team recommended the following basic structure:


General Management
Education Department
Culture Department
Planning Division
Support Service Functions

The Education Department

The purpose of the Education Department is to manage education services in the country. Its main functions include: (a) Administration and control of field education services; (b) Planning of educational development for all levels of the formal education system; and (c) Provision of methods advisory services in the education system.

According to the proposed structure, the education department has three major divisions: (a) Field Education Management Division; (b) Malawi College of Distance Education; (c) Educational Methods Advisory Services Division.

Field Education Management Division. Field Education Management Division (FEMD) will provide educational administration for primary and secondary schools as well as teacher and technical colleges. The division will take care of administrative issues that can not be decentralized to lower levels. These issues include the following:

1. Reviewing rules and regulations for application in institutions and monitoring their application;
2. Managing national bursaries and awards;
3. Processing selection and placement of students to secondary schools;
4. Distribution of teachers across regions and schools;
5. Receiving and processing discipline matters from institutions deemed to be outside the jurisdiction of Regional Offices or institutions;
6. Receiving and processing appeals from lower levels;
7. Management of technical assistance from international organisations with linkages to teachers.

Apart from educational administration, the division was expected to oversee the operations of Regional Education Offices (REOs). Having given substantial authority and power to the REOs to manage most operational issues at the region, the Division was expected to monitor daily operations and from time to time set parameters for operation at the Regional level. Due to the recommendation for decentralization and therefore relegation of operational issues to the lower levels, it was recommended that some posts be deleted because it was anticipated that workload at headquarters would be drastically reduced and thus require fewer numbers of staff. However, it was also recommended that some posts be replaced and upgraded in order to make grade commensurate with the increased responsibility and complexity of certain senior roles. For example, the posts of inspector of schools were replaced by methods advisors and upgraded because these specialists would be responsible for single subject areas through out the entire education system, that is, primary, secondary, technical and teacher training.

Methods Advisory Services Division. Methods Advisory Services (MAS) was designed to replace the Inspectorate at headquarters. Some of the responsibilities of MAS included: monitoring all field inspections of regional and district levels; managing and co-ordinating in-service education and training courses for teachers, inspectors etc.; managing the methods development and evaluation function of the Ministry; developing policy proposals for changes in methods and curriculum; examining the entire education field systematically from primary schools, secondary schools, teacher training colleges, and technical colleges sub-systems.

The Planning Division

The planning division plans development for all sectors of the formal education system including the expansion of existing facilities. It ensures that there is a balance in the amount of resources allocated to each sector, and that equity of access to educational services is achieved or maintained for all communities in the nation. In order to achieve its purpose, the Division carries out the following main functions:

1. (a) Identification, preparation and appraisal of projects,

   (b) Supervision and evaluation of projects,
2. Promotion of efficiency and equity in the development of the education system by:

   ensuring that educationally disadvantaged areas in the nation are allocated proportionately more resources to bring them as close to the nation average as possible,
3. Research and evaluation of policies and programmes in the education sector, and
4. Collection, analysis, compilation and interpretation of statistical data.

In view of the functions, the Planning Division is divided into three branches:

(a) The Planning branch

(b) The Research and Evaluation branch

(c) The Statistics branch.

Functions 1 and 2 form the Planning branch. The report proposed decentralizing planning to the Regional level to improve the planning process. However, it was felt that while officers manage educational services at institutions, districts and regional levels, they do not have enough time and knowledge to carry out specialised planning functions. Therefore, in order to improve planning it was recommended that each REO should be provided with a specialist planner to assist in the planning functions. Main duties of the regional planner were outlined as follows:

1. Collecting and analyzing relevant statistical data and other faults to determine fair distribution in the region.
2. Analyzing status of distribution and updating the same within the region.
3. Following up matters relating to development plans submitted by District Development Committees (DDC) and liaising with headquarters.
4. Consolidating DDC plans into regional plans.
5. Conducting physical surveys of areas where new development projects are to be located and making relevant recommendations.
6. Producing status reports on implementation of the National Plan as it affects the region.
7. Attending Regional Development Committee meetings.
8. Advising Heads of Institutions, District Education Officers, and the REOs.

This would enable the Ministry to acquire the most up to date National Planning inputs through use of specialist planners in the Regions who would be working hand in hand with educational managers at the REOs. To ensure a proper interface between education managers and specialist planners in the region, the review team expected that the education managers would be given proper training in planning.

Support Services Division

This division is made up of (a) Office Utility; (b) Accounting Services; and (c) Personnel.

Accounting Services. The DPMT report observed that with centralized accounting, there was pressure of work and consequent backlog. This caused delays in payments and lessened worker satisfaction and productivity, strengthening the cause for decentralization of accounting services to the regional level. Hence, it was recommended that accounting functions that will easily be done at regional level such as: (a) payment of goods and services within budgeted levels; and (b) payment of salaries, advances, and allowances for primary school, secondary school and REO staff, should be decentralized to regional offices. Decisions on what to purchase, and what quantities, could be quickly done at the regions as opposed to the centralized system. Dispersing accounting activities into regions will eventually reduce delays experienced under the centralized system. Each region will have its own registries which will keep personal files of teachers of the region, and teachers will be served quickly.

Under the decentralized system government secondary schools are expected to plan their own operations and develop their own budgets within the limits of the allocation approved by the Ministry. The allocations are based on the number of students enrolled at the school and programs being offered over the budget period, a school year. School budgets must stay within the amount allocated, must observe the constraints of legislation and ministry policy and cover the following expenditure categories: (a) supplies and materials needed to operate the school and its programs; (b) salaries, allowances and benefits; (c) utility service costs; and (d) plant and equipment maintenance costs. Once drafted, school budgets are examined and approved by senior administrators.

Since effective decentralization requires devolution of responsibility for finance to regional offices, there is no justification for the existence of certain accounting posts at headquarters. Hence, the DPMT report recommended streamlining accounting services at headquarters. This meant deleting certain posts or deploying some at the three regional offices to provide for decentralized operations, a move which is believed to be essential to improving efficiency and effectiveness of the Ministry. Allocation of duties was therefore, worked out to provide for: (a) proper management of the Ministry's accounts; (b) monitoring of expenditure of regional offices; (c) direct control of the Ministry headquarters' accounting function; and (d) savings on the allocation of posts.

Structure and Functions For the Regional Education Office

Prior to the decentralization reform, the Regional Education Office (REO) was concerned only with the primary education sub-system. REO used to oversee the operations of the primary sub-system but with limited power as some of the operational decisions, such as payments were made at headquarters. Decentralization broadened the responsibilities of regional offices considerably.

Previously the REO performed the following functions: (a) administration and co-ordination of district primary education functions; (b) administration and co-ordination of district inspectorate functions; and (c) provision of support services. In performing these functions the regional offices played an advisory role on matters concerning government education policy to Local Education Authorities (LEAs), District Education Offices, the public and proprietors of grant aided schools. The office also played a representative role for the Ministry in the regional development committees and similar committees.

The DPMT review observed that the office had little original jurisdiction over many operational matters affecting the region. This was illustrated in the Price Waterhouse report (1988) when it stated that:

It is clear and widely accepted by officers at all

> levels within the Ministry, that decision making and much of routine administration work is highly centralized at Ministry Headquarters in Lilongwe. This includes routine operational items such as approval of teachers leave, teachers' allowances and school maintenance work. Disciplinary matters are also highly centralized. Almost every officer and teacher we met outside Headquarters and some within, has expressed concern over this apparent over-centralization (paragraph 434).

The DPMT report argued for decentralization whereby the REO should be granted original jurisdiction over a wide range of operational matters which will cover the primary schools, secondary schools, teacher training colleges and technical colleges in the region. These matters include:

(1) Payment for goods and services rendered to these institutions within authorized budgets;

(2) Payment of salaries, allowances, advances to all staff in these institutions;

(3) Decision on matters of discipline of ALL students and pupils in the institutions;

(4) Transfers, leave and postings of staff and students within the region;

(5) Inspection of all secondary schools and colleges in the region;

(6) Discipline of staff in the region but with reference to headquarters;

(7) Recommendation for promotion, confirmation of staff to headquarters;

(8) Staff welfare in the region;

(9) Preparation of estimates and budgets;

(10) Approval of travels of staff on duty in the region;

(11) Registration of schools;

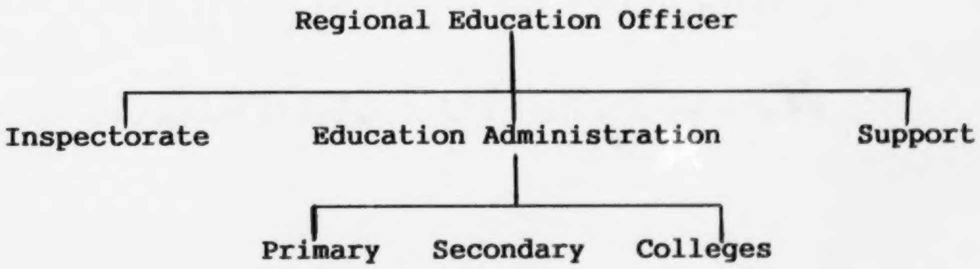
(12) Maintenance and upkeep of institutions in the region;

(13) Organization of courses for teachers in the region with close liaison with headquarters;

(14) Monitoring expenditure by warrant holders in the region; and

(15) Consolidating of district education plans for onward transmission to headquarters as a regional plan.

In order for the REO to embrace all formal education sub-systems, the report recommended changes to the REO structure as well as the calibre of personnel, process, financial and infrastructure resources. The following is the recommended structure for the REO for education services:


Regional Education Officer
Inspectorate
Education Administration
Support
Primary
Secondary
Colleges

Inspectorate. In relation to the secondary sub-system, the DPMT review found that the sub-system was faced with infrequent visits of Inspectors who operate from headquarters. The few visits achieved did not allow for true problem diagnosis, meaningful observation and fruitful discussion and advice. This was due to the nature of the visits. The team believed that the situation was aggravated by lack of supervision in the schools. Traditionally, only headmasters and headmistresses and their deputies were expected to carry out supervision yet they have heavy teaching loads to add to administrative duties. These duties take all their time during working hours so that, in essence, no teacher supervision goes on.

Experience shows that teachers are appointed as Heads of Departments to carry out teacher supervision but the appointment is not based on any specialized knowledge and skills, neither did it provide any authority.

The redefinition of the role of headquarters inspectorate meant that the inspectorate moves from headquarters to the regional offices, closer to the field. The report also recommended the enhancement of teacher supervision at institutional level with the head of department as the school based inspector. It is believed that a head of department would have more time with the teachers, therefore is in the best position to spot the real weaknesses and strengths of the teachers and thus can give more constructive advice and guidance. He or she is also in the best position to make regular follow-ups on various issues to ensure that standards are maintained. The system would not be hampered by transportation problems and therefore it would be less expensive.

Education administration. Educational administration is now to cater to all education institutions in the region and it is to cover the following operational issues: (a) student management; (b) personnel management; (c) regional educational planning; (d) registration of schools; (e) interpretation of educational policies; (f) regional estimates and budgets; and (g) procurement and distribution of teaching materials and equipment.

Support Services. Support services establishment which was in existence in a REO was more appropriate for the previous narrow scope support services. As was noted above, support services are also regarded as very important in the process of decentralization and proper management of functions in the regional offices. Therefore, with decentralization the scope of support services needed to be widened to include (a) personnel and office services; (b) accounting services; and (C) building maintenance services.

As has been noted elsewhere in the chapter, the DPMT report recommended that in decentralizing functions in accounting services the REO will now have mandate to control its own budget and effect payments for (a) goods and services rendered to the regional offices, and all education institutions in the region; (b) salaries, allowances, and leave grants for all staff in the education institutions in the region.

Decentralization of functions from headquarters will mean an increase in personnel at REO with consequent increase in workload. This calls for additional posts under the support services so that all the services therein as per the new and wider scope, will be performed satisfactorily. For example, the recommendation that each region should have a maintenance unit to service institutions in the region means hiring qualified maintenance staff because none existed at regional or institutional levels.

Discussion

The foregoing analysis revealed that in an effort to improve organizational performance, DPMT proposed a major decentralization reform for the educational system in Malawi. Two components were central to the educational decentralization reform in Malawi:

1. Improving the organizational structures; and
2. Delegating authority and powers to REOs, DEOs and institutions for operational and routine matters.

The World Bank (1988) writing on Education in Sub-Saharan Africa, noted that "organizational structures establish predictable relationships between people and tasks and thus channel the processes of getting things done. They are intimately connected with the distribution of power and authority, and they have considerable impact on decision making and resource allocation" (p. 82). Hence, the review teams saw an acute need for a structure appropriate to the management of the education system in Malawi.

Apart from the reasons stipulated in the various review reports, experience shows that there were other good reasons for believing that education system could be made more efficient if certain functions and responsibilities were devolved away from headquarters. One perspective for the arguments in favour of more decentralization has to do with the characteristics of the country: long distances between individual schools and headquarters and relatively poorly developed system of communication (the absence of all-weather roads in some cases, few functioning vehicles), and a slow postal service. According to World Bank (1988), under such conditions, the flow of resources and information between headquarters and individual institutions is frequently interrupted or halted. The bank suggested that an increased reliance on local initiatives might obviate the need for such flows or alleviate the consequences of their not occurring.

As implied above, rigid centralization has tended to block the flow of information and decisions, to alienate schools from their local environments, and to limit their ability to respond to local needs and resource opportunities. Decentralization can, by supporting regional and institutional autonomy, contribute significantly to better educational management and increase responsiveness to school and local needs.

The movement from a centralized to a decentralized form of decision making requires several changes in organizational structure. The first of these relates to transfer of authority. If regional offices and institutions are to be given meaningful decision making authority, that decision making authority must be relinquished by those at the upper levels of the organizational hierarchy. In the case of Malawi, it becomes even more important that senior administrators at Ministry Headquarters devote more attention to their principal functions: broad policy planning; designing policy implementation strategies; monitoring the consequences of policy implementation through observation, testing, and evaluation; and adapting policy in light of its evaluated impact. Decentralizing the capability to gather and aggregate data to regional and district offices simplifies the task of headquarters and enables planning personnel at headquarters to reorient toward quality control, analysis, and dissemination.

It has generally been argued that effective decentralization requires devolution of responsibility for finance, administration and staff matters to the regional offices (The World Bank, 1989). According to Bloomer (1991), delegating financial responsibilities to regional offices and schools can bring other significant advantages. Local administrators or headteachers seldom feel any incentive to achieve economies if there is no benefit to their regions, districts or schools. If, however, they redeploy money to matters of greater priority, ways of achieving improvements in the management of resources are usually found. Local managers are faced with the financial consequences of their decisions, thus encouraging greater sense of realism and responsibility.

With dispersed accounting activities into regions there is a need to devise a long-range control mechanism at headquarters which will be monitoring salary expenditure from regions. This will ensure conformity with official accounting procedures.

The arguments put forward for proposing decentralization are consistent with those articulated in the literature for both developed as well as developing countries. McGinn and Street (1986) noted three motives why governments seek decentralization in relation to third world. These were to improve efficiency of administration, to increase system effectiveness, and to increase local participation. It is believed that satisfaction of the first two motives would seem to maintain or to recover the competence of an organization. In the case of Malawi, the third reason does not appear to be obvious in relation to government secondary education. However, McGinn and Street (1986, p. 473) noted that "the third reason given why central governments should want to decentralize, increased local participation, is sometimes offered as instrumental for the other two and occasionally as an objective in itself."

Perceived Influence of Selected Factors in the Introduction and Development of Decentralization

This section focuses on the responses to part A of the questionnaire which examines the perceived influence exerted by selected factors on the introduction and development of more decentralized educational decision making in Malawi. Respondents were asked to indicate their perceptions on how important selected factors were in influencing the introduction and development of more decentralized educational decision making in Malawi.

The following research question is addressed: What factors influenced the introduction and development of more decentralized control over educational decisions?

In all, twelve major factors had been suggested from a variety of sources in the literature and the final list was assembled after the second pilot testing. The factors were: (1) economic factors; (2) changes in government policy; (3) current administrative practices; (4) desire for efficiency in the administration of education; (5) concern with the effectiveness of educational administration; (6) public pressure for greater accountability in education; (7) pressure from Malawian teachers; (8) increased size of the Ministry of Education; (9) improved technology; (10) increased number of highly qualified secondary school teachers; (11) improved calibre of administrative personnel in secondary schools; and (12) pressure from donors (e.g. World Bank). In addition, respondents were asked to identify other factors which they considered important or very important in influencing educational decentralization in Malawi.

Each respondent was asked to indicate on a five-point scale the degree of influence of each factor. The scale ranged from one (Not important) to five (Very important). Table 5.01 presents the mean scores of responses associated with the degree of influence exerted by each of the twelve factors in rank order. The means are taken as a measure of the degree of influence of a particular factor. Factors with a mean of 4.0 or greater are considered "very important influences", those with means from 3.0 and 3.9 are considered "important influences", and those with means below 3.0 are regarded as the least salient of influencing factors. Table 5.01 also displays the standard deviations for each factor. The standard deviations are taken to be a measure of agreement. If the standard deviation is relatively low, it indicates that the group whose data were analyzed is in close agreement, whereas if the standard deviation is relatively high, the level of agreement would be much lower.

The table indicates that respondents as a group perceived most of the factors as being influential to some extent. However, four factors were identified as very important. The factor with the highest mean score (4.62) was "desire for efficiency in the administration of education." This was followed by three other factors listed

Table 5.01

Influence Exerted by Selected Factors as Perceived by All Respondents

Factors	Mean	S.D.	N	Rank
A desire for efficiency in the administration of education	4.62	0.75	39	1
Concern with the effectiveness of educational administration	4.46	0.72	39	2
The increased size of the Ministry of Education and Culture	4.28	1.00	39	3
Pressure from donors (e.g. World Bank)	4.00	1.01	38	4
Current administrative practices in Government	3.76	1.12	37	5
Changes in government policy	3.24	1.13	38	6
Public pressure for greater accountability in education	3.19	1.27	37	7
The economic factors	3.13	1.19	38	8
Pressure from Malawian teachers	3.11	1.15	37	9
The improved calibre of administrative personnel in secondary schools	2.45	1.18	38	10
The increased numbers of highly qualified secondary school teachers	2.16	1.13	38	11
Improvements in technology	1.82	0.87	38	12

Scale used was: 1 = not important to 5 = very important

in descending order of their means: "concern with the effectiveness of educational administration" (4.46); "increased size of the Ministry of Education" (4.28); and "pressure from donors" (4.00).

According to respondents, the next five factors in rank order, located within the range of 3.0 to 3.9, were perceived as important influences. Listed in descending order of their means, these factors included the following: "current administrative practices in government" (3.76); "changes in government policy" (3.24); "public pressure for greater accountability in education" (3.19); "economic factors" (3.13); and "pressure from Malawian teachers" (3.11).

The lowest-ranked factors, all with mean scores below 3.0 were "improved calibre of administrative personnel in secondary schools" (2.45); "increased number of highly qualified secondary school teachers" (2.16); and "improvement in technology" (1.82). These results indicated that respondents perceived improvement in technology as least important in influencing the introduction and development of the recent educational decentralization in Malawi.

Differences Between Headquarters' and School Administrators' Perceptions

Tables 5.02 and 5.03 present summaries of responses from two major groups of respondents (headquarters and

Table 5.02

Influence Exerted by Selected Factors as Perceived by Headquarters' Respondents

Factors	Mean	S.D.	N	Rank
4. A desire for efficiency in the administration of education	4.60	0.83	15	1
5. Concern with the effectiveness of educational administration	4.47	0.64	15	2
8. The increased size of the Ministry of Education and Culture	4.07	0.88	15	3
3. Current administrative practices in Government	3.93	1.03	15	4
12. Pressure from donors (e.g. World Bank)	3.80	1.01	15	5
2. Changes in government policy	3.20	0.94	15	6.5
6. Public pressure for greater accountability in education	3.20	1.32	15	6.5
1. The economic factors	3.00	1.07	15	8
7. Pressure from Malawian teachers	2.60	1.12	15	9
11. The improved calibre of administrative personnel in secondary schools	2.00	1.13	15	10
9. Improvements in technology	1.87	0.99	15	11
10. The increased numbers of highly qualified secondary school teachers	1.80	0.86	15	12

Scale used was: 1 = not important to 5 = very important

Table 5.03

Influence Exerted by Selected Factors as Perceived
by Head of Schools

Factors	Mean	S.D.	N	Rank
4. A desire for efficiency in the administration of education	4.62	0.74	21	1
5. Concern with the effectiveness of educational administration	4.43	0.81	21	2
8. The increased size of the Ministry of Education and Culture	4.38	1.12	21	3
12. Pressure from donors (e.g. World Bank)	4.00	1.03	20	4
3. Current administrative practices in Government	3.53	1.17	19	5
7. Pressure from Malawian teachers	3.32	1.06	19	6
6. Public pressure for greater accountability in education	3.20	1.32	15	7.5
2. Changes in government policy	3.20	1.32	20	7.5
1. The economic factors	3.10	1.29	20	9
11. The improved calibre of administrative personnel in secondary schools	2.70	1.08	20	10
10. The increased numbers of highly qualified secondary school teachers	2.30	1.26	20	11
9. Improvements in technology	1.70	0.73	20	12

Scale used was: 1 = not important to 5 = very important

school administrators) with respect to their perceptions of the importance of factors that influenced the introduction and development of decentralized educational decision making in Malawi. Both groups of respondents perceived most of the factors as being influential to some extent. School administrators perceived four factors as having very important influence, while headquarters' administrators, who are the policy makers, only perceived three factors as very important. Interestingly, both groups ranked the desire for efficiency (item 4), concern with effectiveness (item 5), and increased size on the ministry (item 8) as the top three on the rank. However, while school administrators perceived pressure from donors as a very important influence, respondents from headquarters ranked it as an important influences. Generally, the differences in perceptions between the two groups on factors that met the criteria for very important and important appear to be minor.

Table 5.04 identifies the items on which there was a substantial difference between the two main groups of respondents on the perceived importance of factors. The final column shows the difference between the means of the two groups. Only items where the mean difference was greater than .5 between the two groups were reported. Such differences were noted in relation to three out of the twelve factors as indicated in Table 5.04. These results indicated that school administrators perceived each of the three factors as more influential than did the

Table 5.04

Differences Between MHQ and School Respondents onDecentralization Perceived Influence of Selected Factors

	Group 1 Ministry Personnel (N=15)		Group 2 School Personnel (N=19-20)		
Factors	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Differences in Means*
Pressure from Malawian teachers	2.60	1.12	3.32	1.06	.72
The increased number of highly qualified secondary school teachers	1.80	0.86	2.30	1.26	.50
The improved calibre of administrative personnel in secondary schools	2.00	1.13	2.70	1.08	.70

Scale used was: 1 = not important to 5 = very important

* Items where the difference in means between the two groups was .5 or greater

administrators at headquarters. It is noteworthy that all three factors are related to school personnel.

Discussion

Analysis of the factors that influenced educational decentralization revealed five main categories: (1) Desire for improved administration; (2) Environmental pressures; (3) External pressures; (4) Ministry size; and (5) Improved information available. It is noteworthy that both factors in the category of "desire for improved administration" ranked highest among the four items which were perceived as very important. The other two factors which were also perceived as having very important influence pertained to the categories of ministry size and external pressures (pressure from donors e.g World Bank).

Three of the four factors in the environmental pressures category (economic factors, changes in government policy, and public pressure for greater accountability) and one of two factors in the category of external pressures (current administrative practices in government) were perceived to have had moderate influence.

All items in the category of improved information available and one item in environmental pressures category (pressure from teachers) were perceived as the least important.

The findings regarding educational administrators' perceptions on the degree of influence of the twelve factors on the introduction and development of a more decentralized educational system in Malawi might be expected. This is because the most dominant theme in the findings of all ministerial management reviews was concern for efficiency in systematic educational administration. The review teams identified a number of bureaucratic problems and frustration among personnel especially in regional and district offices as well as institutions which they associated with the inefficiency of the excessive centralization and concentration of decision making. Centralism as a source of inefficiency had long been legitimated by a policy myth of "equity being delivered by neutral bureaucracies to remote and poorer locations." It appears that policy makers in education did not consider principles other than equity, such as effectiveness, quality or efficiency.

Concern with the educational effectiveness of management was ranked second among the very important factors in influencing educational decentralization in Malawi. The general view was that policy formulation had become overly centralized and non-responsive to the perceived needs of schools. Policy-advisory and policy making services had, in general, become confused with policy implementation. One respondent noted that this had resulted in administrators at lower levels being deskilled through little serious experience in administrative decision making. Few had knowledge of managerial services. According to respondents at the REOs, lower level administrators tended to concentrate on implementing directives without questioning them, even if they were obviously absurd. They could not take initiatives and were not responsive to student needs.

A number of respondents who were interviewed also noted that priority in management had been given to administrative co-ordination and continuity, fidelity and integration, rather than to responsiveness, diversity and professional involvement.

In an attempt to address the identified management issues and problems, review teams, which were external to the ministry of education, recommended decentralization as a means to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the system. These findings are consistent with Ezioni's writings which indicated that the consequences or effects of centralization and decentralization of control may be considered in terms of the efficiency and effectiveness of an organization (Ezioni, 1964).

The increased size of the Ministry of Education with a mean score of 4.28, ranked third in importance as a factor that influenced the introduction and development of more decentralized educational decision making. The World Bank (1987) noted that although MOEC management had expanded in response to the rapidly developing educational system in Malawi; management practices, methods and procedures had not responded adequately to the needs of managing a developing system.

As organizations grow and age, the size of the administrative component and the use of formal documents in administration increase. Hence, it becomes more difficult to make all decisions in one central location. As an organization becomes more complex, it also becomes more difficult for a few leaders to be the most knowledgable experts in all phases of the operation.

Consequently, organizational growth and complexity are positively associated with decentralized decision making (Heron & Friesen, 1973; Ross, 1977). The size of an organization affects the shape and character of the formal structure. Unless growth or down sizing is matched with corresponding alterations to the formal structure, problems inevitably arise (Bolman & Deal, 1991). Delegation is required due to the large size of the system, division of labour, and diversity in the environments. Mansfield (1973) concluded that increasing organizational size forces management to delegate authority, resulting in decentralization rather than centralization of decisions. The task of administration in the central office becomes more complex, with a number of systems, notably Ghana and Nigeria in Africa, Edmonton in Canada and Australia decentralizing to the regional, district and institutional levels decisions related to a substantial portion of the budget.

Although other external donors have supported particular elements of the education system (most notably

Overseas Development Administration (ODA), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the African Development Bank (AFDB)), the World Bank has had the most sustained and most comprehensive involvement in the sector in Malawi. As noted earlier, bureaucratic problems identified by The World Bank led to The Bank financing a study of the management of the system. Based on its findings, the study proposed an organization for the ministry with the principal feature of decentralization. Since funding for the implementation of the sixth International Development Aid (IDA) education project depended on a vastly improved ministry management, the Malawi government was under pressure to reorganize and decentralize educational decision making in a manner that was acceptable to IDA before negotiations on the proposed credit began. Hence, it is not surprising that the results indicated that pressure from donors (e.g. World Bank) had very important influence in the introduction and development of a more decentralized system.

Resource availability for education has remained very highly constrained, especially in the last decade. Hence, the government was concerned with "perpetual" over-expenditure by government ministries. This increased the need for an improved budgeting system. Thus prior to the 1989/90 educational decentralization reform, the Malawi Government had adopted a "new refined budgeting system" financed by the World Bank in 1987. It is not surprising therefore that the results indicated that changes in government policy and economic factors had some influence in educational decentralization. The public pressure for greater accountability in education likely contributed in part to the implementation of the new budgeting system as a system of accountability. The purpose of such a system of accountability is to ensure that public funds are used in accordance with the government treasury guidelines. The new system brought about a strong emphasis on giving more authority over their budget to cost centres such as government secondary schools.

Summary

This chapter provides an overview of the origin, objectives and proposed nature of educational decentralization in Malawi. The origin was traced back to bureaucratic problems identified by The World Bank. As such, The Bank provided for a study of the management of the education system. The study undertaken by Price Waterhouse, an international management consultancy firm based in London, recommended decentralization. Based upon the study by Price Waterhouse, the DPMT undertook a closer study of the Ministry of Education and proposed a framework for decentralization. All the review teams appear to put forward two motives for proposing more decentralized educational decision making: to improve efficiency, and to increase system effectiveness.

The findings regarding perceptions of the degree of influence of specific factors on the introduction and development of the educational decentralization reform in Malawi revealed that respondents perceived nine of the twelve factors to have had important influence. Of the nine important factors, the following were perceived to have had very important influence: desire for efficiency, concern for effectiveness, increased size of the ministry, and pressure from donors.

CHAPTER 6

CONTROL OVER EDUCATIONAL DECISIONS IN 1994

Until the 1980s, the education system in Malawi was characterized by a highly centralized pattern of administration. The end of the 1980s saw a break in this tradition and a move to a more decentralized structural organization and a devolution of certain decision making powers. Following the implementation of this decentralized system, Regional Education Offices (REOs) and government secondary schools were expected to exercise more control over certain educational decisions.

This chapter presents a report of educational administrators' perceptions of the actual degree and preferred loci of control exercised by five organizational levels over certain educational decisions. It addresses the third, fourth and fifth research questions of the study:

3. What is the perceived degree of actual control over educational decisions, exercised by five organizational levels before and after the 1989/90 decentralization reform?

4. What is the locus of preferred control over educational decisions by each of the five organizational levels and how is this related to the locus of actual control at the time of the study?

5. What changes in control do educational administrators perceive as having occurred as a result of more decentralization and what differences exist between

headquarters and school administrators with respect to the perceived changes?

The chapter begins with an analysis of the perceptions of educational administrators in relation to the general degree of control exerted by each level before and after the recent government initiative to decentralize educational decision making. The degree of control is measured by the means of all responses to items in section 1 of part B of the questionnaire. This is followed by an analysis of the actual locus of control at the time of the study in relation to responses indicating the administrators' preferred locus of control analysis. Awareness of the discrepancies may assist policy makers in future endeavour at decentralizing more decision functions to lower levels of the organization. Finally, changes in patterns of control between the two periods are examined.

General Degree of Control

The succeeding analysis focuses on respondents' perceptions of the locus of control over educational decisions before and after the 1989/90 decentralization reform in Malawi. Data derived from the responses of all administrators are considered first.

The questionnaire items were organized to form nine categories: (1) finance and budgeting; (2) capital expenditures; (3) equipment, supplies and services; (4) curriculum and instruction; (5) personnel management; (6)

student management; (7) organizational structure; (8) community relations; and (9) policy making and decision making. Tables 6.01 to 6.21 display data related to these nine categories.

Respondents were asked to indicate their perceptions of the actual degree of control and preferred locus of control with respect to five categories of organizational levels. These were the Ministry Headquarters (MHQ), Regional Education Offices (REOs), Heads of Schools (HOS), Academic Departments (AD) and Teachers. Three responses were requested with respect to each group: perceptions of the situation at the time of the study in 1994 (after the 1989/90 reform); recollection of the situation before the recent decentralization reform of 1989/90; and perceptions as to the organizational level that SHOULD exercise major control over the decision items.

For the purpose of this study, control over educational decisions refers to the power, authority and influence over a decision. This analysis provides one measure of the extent to which the system has truly decentralized as stipulated in the DPMT report.

Finance and Budgeting

Table 6.01 presents the perceived distribution of the actual degree of control over finance and budgeting, as exercised by the different organizational levels, before and

Table 6.01

Degree of Control Exerted by Each Level Over Decisions
on School Finance and Budgeting

		Degree of Control						
		Before 1989/90			Currently			
Type of Decision	Level	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Difference*
1. Allocation of funds to a school	MHQ	**4.95**	0.22	39	**4.12**	1.18	34	**-0.83** -
	REO	**1.53**	0.88	36	**3.18**	1.36	34	**1.65** +++
	HOS	**1.69**	0.99	35	**3.61**	1.15	36	**1.92** +++
	AD	**1.29**	0.63	34	**2.22**	1.05	36	**0.93** +
	Teachers	**1.18**	0.53	33	**1.72**	0.94	36	**0.54** +
2. Staff salaries	MHQ	**4.92**	0.35	39	**4.36**	1.21	39	**-0.56** -
	REO	**1.53**	1.16	36	**3.05**	1.53	37	**1.52** +++
	HOS	**1.40**	0.54	36	**1.58**	1.08	36	**0.18**
	AD	**1.08**	0.37	36	**1.11**	0.53	36	**0.03**
	Teachers	**1.14**	0.59	36	**1.17**	0.71	36	**0.03**
3. Payment for school equipment	MHQ	**4.68**	0.81	38	**3.56**	1.52	36	**-1.12** - -
	REO	**2.00**	1.31	35	**3.77**	1.37	35	**1.77** +++
	HOS	**1.91**	1.27	35	**3.47**	1.50	36	**1.58** +++
	AD	**1.12**	0.54	34	**1.49**	0.82	35	**0.37**
	Teachers	**1.06**	0.34	34	**1.20**	0.53	35	**0.14**
4. Payment for services rendered to schools	MHQ	**4.92**	0.27	39	**2.92**	1.56	36	**-2.00** - - -
	REO	**2.06**	1.43	35	**4.00**	1.41	39	**1.94** +++
	HOS	**1.83**	1.04	35	**3.90**	1.11	38	**1.07** ++
	AD	**1.11**	0.40	35	**1.53**	0.79	34	**0.42**
	Teachers	**1.06**	0.34	35	**1.24**	0.61	34	**0.18**

Table 6.01 (continued)

Type of Decision	Level	Degree of Control						
		Before 1989/90			Currently			
		Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Difference*
5. Distribution of expenditures within a school	MHQ	**3.92**	1.64	37	**2.44**	1.65	36	**-1.48** - -
	REO	**1.52**	0.95	35	**2.49**	1.50	35	**0.97** +
	HOS	**3.11**	1.72	36	**4.60**	0.80	37	**1.49** ++
	AD	**1.80**	0.99	35	**2.82**	1.29	34	**1.02** ++
	Teachers	**1.24**	0.61	34	**2.12**	1.34	33	**0.88** +
6. Allocation of funds to a new instructional program	MHQ	**4.87**	0.66	39	**4.67**	0.90	39	**-0.20**
	REO	**1.71**	1.15	35	**2.51**	1.31	35	**0.80** +
	HOS	**1.29**	0.46	34	**2.24**	1.48	34	**0.95** +
	AD	**1.09**	0.29	34	**1.68**	1.12	34	**0.59** +
	Teachers	**1.09**	0.29	34	**1.60**	1.11	34	**0.51** +
7. Fund raising for a school	MHQ	**2.80**	1.84	35	**2.47**	1.69	34	**-0.33**
	REO	**1.27**	0.62	34	**1.91**	1.13	33	**0.64** +
	HOS	**3.42**	1.54	36	**3.95**	1.36	38	**0.53** +
	AD	**2.11**	1.35	36	**2.54**	1.58	35	**0.43**
	Teachers	**2.06**	1.31	35	**2.44**	1.50	36	**0.38**
8. School fees	MHQ	**4.67**	1.08	33	**4.47**	1.16	32	**-0.20**
	REO	**1.34**	0.83	32	**1.78**	1.34	32	**0.44**
	HOS	**2.00**	1.59	31	**2.20**	1.61	30	**0.20**
	AD	**1.13**	0.72	31	**1.27**	0.91	30	**0.14**
	Teachers	**1.13**	0.72	31	**1.27**	0.87	30	**0.14**

Table 6.01 (continued)

		Degree of Control						
		Before 1989/90			Currently			
Type of decision	Level	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Difference*
9. Boarding fees	MHQ	**3.88**	1.70	34	**3.90**	1.72	31	**0.02**
	REO	**1.27**	0.52	30	**1.89**	1.17	28	**0.62** +
	HOS	**3.03**	1.74	31	**3.44**	1.61	32	**0.41**
	AD	**1.26**	0.89	31	**1.26**	0.77	31	**0.00**
	Teachers	**1.34**	1.10	32	**1.36**	1.11	31	**0.02**

MHQ = Ministry Headquarters; REO = Regional Education Office; HOS = Heads of Schools: AD = Academic Department

The scale uses was: 1: Negligible Degree of Control
2: Low Degree of Control
3: Moderate Degree of Control
4: Considerable Degree of Control
5: High Degree of Control

* + increase of control of .5 to .99, ++ increase of control of 1.0 to 1.49, +++ increase of control of 1.5 or more
- decrease of control of .5 to .99, - - decrease of control of 1.0 to 1.49, - - - decrease of control of 1.5 or more

after the 1989/90 decentralization reform in Malawi. Nine decision items were examined in this category. The table, and subsequent tables in this chapter display the means (M) and the standard deviations (SD) of all responses to the relevant questionnaire items. The means are regarded as a measure of the individuals' or organizational level's degree of control over decisions. As such, throughout the chapter, individuals or levels with means of 4.0 or greater are regarded as exerting a "high degree of control", those with means of between 3.0 and 4.0 are regarded as exerting a "considerable degree of control", those with means of between 2.0 and 3.0 are regarded as exerting a "moderate degree of control" and below 2.0 are regarded as exerting a "low or negligible degree of control." The standard deviations are taken to be a measure of agreement. If the standard deviation is relatively low, it indicates that the group whose data were analyzed was in close agreement, whereas if the standard deviation is relatively high, there was a low level of agreement. The "difference column" denotes change in control. Only differences of .5 and above will be considered significant changes in control. The extent to which change had occurred in the degree of control over educational decisions during the periods "before 1989/90 and at the time of the study, 1994 is indicated by plus (+) or minus (-) signs. A minus sign implies loss of control by the individuals or organizational level, while a plus sign indicates increased degree of control.

Item 1. Deciding the Allocation of Funds to a School. On this item respondents indicated that ministry headquarters with mean scores of 4.95 and 4.12 was perceived to exercise most control before and after the decentralization reform. Very little control was perceived to be exercised by the regional education office and the heads of schools (means 1.53 and 1.69 respectively) before the reform. However, both categories gained considerable control as a result of the decentralization reform. The results also indicated that academic departments and teachers exercised the least control over this decision.

The standard deviations for the period "before 1989/90" were relatively low (ranging from .22 to .99), indicating that there was a high level of agreement with respect to degree of control. However, apart from the standard deviation for teachers, the standard deviations for the period 1994 appear to be relatively high indicating much less agreement among respondents. This finding suggests that the respondents were still figuring it out.

Item 2. Staff Salaries. As was the case with item one, during both periods, ministry headquarters with mean scores of 4.92 and 4.36 exercised major control on decisions pertaining to staff salaries. At the time of the study, the REO gained considerable control while heads of schools, academic departments and teachers had very little control.

Item 3. Payment for School Equipment. According to the respondents, before the decentralization reform, major control over this item was perceived to be held by the Ministry headquarters (means of 4.68). After the decentralization reform the REO, ministry headquarters and head of schools with means of 3.77, 3.56 and 3.47 respectively, were seen to exercise considerable control.

Item 4. Payment for Services Rendered to Schools. Here again respondents indicated that before the reform, ministry headquarters with a mean of 4.92 exerted more control over the decision item. REO with a mean of 4.0 was reported to have gained a high degree of control, with the heads of schools with a mean of 3.90 having considerable control and headquarters with a mean of 2.92 having assumed a moderate amount of control after the reform.

Item 5. Distribution of Expenditure within a School. Ministry headquarters and heads of schools were seen to exercise considerable control over this decision before 1989/90. However, at the time of the study, respondents indicated that heads of schools with a mean of 4.60 exercised the major control with the rest having a moderately low amount of control.

Item 6. Allocation of Funds to a New Instructional Program. The respondents indicated that during both periods ministry headquarters was perceived as dominant in the decision making. Although the other categories appear to have gained some control after as a result of the reform, they were still seen as exercising little control.

Item 7. Fund Raising for a School. For this item, most control was seen to be held by heads of schools, with a fairly moderate amount being exercised by ministry headquarters, academic departments and teachers. However, the standard deviations were generally high for this item (ranging from 1.13 to 1.84) an indication that there was a low level of agreement among the respondents.

Item 8. School Fees. According to respondents, major control over this decision item was perceived to be held by ministry headquarters before as well as after the decentralization reform. Very little control was exercised by the rest of the categories.

Item 9. Boarding Fees. In both periods, ministry headquarters and heads of schools were seen to exercise most control over this decision item. REOs, academic heads and teachers were seen to have a low degree of control.

Discussion in Relation to Preferred Locus of Control

The preceding analysis of "actual control" indicates that ministry headquarters was perceived to have major control over decisions pertaining to items 1, 2, 6 and 8 (allocation of funds to a school, staff salaries, allocation of funds to a new instructional program and school fees respectively). Results of the respondents' perceptions on individuals and organizational levels that should exercise major control over decision items in relation to secondary school finance and budgeting are presented in Table 6.02. While the status quo was generally acceptable to some of the

Table 6.02

Preferred Locus of Control Over Decisions
on School Finance and Budgeting

Type of Decision	Levels of Decision Making											
	MHQ		REO		HOS		AD		Teachers		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
School Finance and Budgeting												
1. Allocation of funds to a school	19	50.0	8	21.1	11	28.9	-	-	-	-	38	100.0
2. Staff salaries	15	39.5	22	57.9	1	2.6	-	-	-	-	38	100.0
3. Payment for school equipment	2	5.9	14	41.2	18	52.9	-	-	-	-	34	100.0
4. Payment for services rendered to schools	2	5.9	6	17.6	26	76.5	-	-	-	-	34	100.0
5. Distribution of expenditures within a school	-	-	1	2.6	35	92.1	2	5.3	-	-	38	100.0
6. Allocation of funds to a new instructional program	19	50.0	4	10.5	8	21.1	7	18.4	-	-	38	100.0
7. Fund raising for a school	-	-	1	2.9	29	76.3	5	13.2	3	7.9	39	100.0
8. School fees	13	38.2	3	8.8	18	52.9	-	-	-	-	34	100.0
9. Boarding Fees	5	17.2	-	-	24	82.8	-	-	-	-	29	100.0

MHQ = Ministry Headquarters; REO = Regional Education Office; HOS = Heads of Schools: AD = Academic Department

administrators for items 1 and 6, others indicated that they preferred that REO and heads of schools should have more control over these decisions. These findings suggest that ministry headquarters' control was much higher in items involving the flow of funds from the central level. Although the allocation of funds to a school is generally perceived to be a matter of national concern, the findings may imply that the REO and heads of schools should be involved in the decision process.

However, the data displayed in table 6.02 suggest that the respondents felt that the REO and heads of schools should exercise more control over decisions pertaining to staff salaries and school fees respectively. Academic departments and teachers were perceived to exercise little control over these decisions and respondents preferred this state of affairs.

Major control over payment for services was perceived to be held by the REO, with the heads exercising an almost equivalent amount of control. A significant difference was evident on this decision item in terms of preferred control. Although the results indicated that the REO and heads were perceived to exercise major control over this decision, respondents preferred that heads should have the highest control over decisions related to payment of services rendered to schools. Interview data revealed that under the more decentralized system, heads authorize payment and the REO makes the actual payment for services rendered. A number of interviewees reported that this is still causing delays in effecting payments, hence, they preferred that schools have the authority to make their own payments.

Heads of schools were perceived to have major control over finance within the school and decisions to raise additional funds. The preferred locus of control was perceived to be the same as the actual locus for these two decision items.

Control over payment for school equipment was seen to be distributed among the REO, ministry headquarters and heads of schools. As was the case for item 4, information gathered through interviews revealed that the distribution was because, while heads of schools authorized payment for small equipment, the REO made the actual payment, and the Ministry was responsible for the purchase of large equipment. However, 52% of the respondents preferred that heads should have the highest degree of control over this decision item, followed by the REO (41%). They also preferred that ministry headquarters should exercise little control over this item and indicated that academic departments and teachers should have no control at all.

In regard to boarding fees, ministry headquarters and heads of schools were seen to exercise most control. Information gathered through interviews offered some clarification on the finding, interviewees reported that although schools collect and use the boarding fees, the ministry prescribes the amounts to be charged. This was substantiated by the Laws of Malawi (1968), which grant the Minister of Education the power to prescribe the fees, including boarding fees, which shall be charged in any school other than a school which is not in receipt of any grant-in-aid from public or local authority funds.

Although the result indicated that the Ministry and heads of schools were perceived to exercise control over decisions on boarding fees, 82.8% of the respondents preferred that heads of schools should exercise major control over the decision item. As the differences between the standard deviations for "before 1989/90" and "currently" reveal, there appears to be much less agreement among the ratings for the current than before 1989/90 degrees of control. This may be attributed to the fact that the respondents were more conversant with the traditional control system than with the current one which is fairly new and still at the implementation stage.

Capital Expenditure

Table 6.03 presents the perceived distribution of control over capital expenditure, as exercised by individuals and organizational levels, before 1989/90 and at the time of the study in 1994. Five decision items were examined in this decision category.

Item 1. Whether to Build a New Secondary School. Responses on this decision item indicated that ministry headquarters with mean scores of 4.97 and extremely low

Table 6.03

Degree of Control Exerted by Each Level Over Decisions on Capital Expenditure

Type of Decision	Level	Degree of Control						Difference*
		Before 1989/90			Currently			
		Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N	
1. Whether to build a new secondary school or not	MHQ	4.97	0.16	38	4.97	0.16	38	0.00
	REO	1.37	0.81	35	1.74	1.26	34	0.37
	HOS	1.06	0.23	36	1.14	0.54	36	0.08
	AD	1.00	0.00	36	1.00	0.00	36	0.00
	Teachers	1.00	0.00	36	1.00	0.00	36	0.00
2. The location of a new secondary school	MHQ	4.76	0.75	38	4.68	0.87	38	-0.08
	REO	2.58	1.46	36	3.23	1.56	35	0.65 +
	HOS	1.08	0.37	36	1.17	0.51	36	0.09
	AD	1.03	0.17	36	1.03	0.17	36	0.00
	Teachers	1.03	0.17	35	1.00	0.00	35	-0.03
3. What type of secondary school should be built	MHQ	5.00	0.00	38	4.97	0.16	38	-0.03
	REO	2.08	1.38	36	2.37	1.54	35	0.29
	HOS	1.08	0.28	36	1.14	0.49	36	0.06
	AD	1.03	0.17	36	1.06	0.33	36	0.03
	Teachers	1.00	0.00	36	1.00	0.00	36	0.00
4. Whether an addition should be made to an existing secondary school	MHQ	4.95	0.32	38	4.90	0.39	38	-0.05
	REO	1.89	1.09	36	2.47	1.42	36	0.59 +
	HOS	1.64	1.07	36	1.94	1.31	36	0.30
	AD	1.09	0.29	34	1.31	0.68	35	0.22
	Teachers	1.09	0.29	33	1.18	0.58	34	0.09

Table 6.03 (continued)

Type of Decision	Level	Degree of Control						Difference*
		Before 1989/90			Currently			
		Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N	
5. Renovation of a secondary school	MHQ	**4.63**	0.85	38	**4.63**	0.68	38	**0.00**
	REO	**2.11**	1.21	35	**3.17**	1.42	36	**1.06** ++
	HOS	**2.42**	1.50	36	**3.32**	1.43	37	**0.90** +
	AD	**1.29**	0.80	34	**1.66**	1.08	35	**0.37**
	Teachers	**1.26**	0.70	35	**1.58**	1.03	36	**0.32**

MHQ = Ministry Headquarters; REO = Regional Education Office; HOS = Heads of Schools: AD = Academic Department

The scale uses was: 1: Negligible Degree of Control
2: Low Degree of Control
3: Moderate Degree of Control
4: Considerable Degree of Control
5: High Degree of Control

* + increase of control of .5 to .99, ++ increase of control of 1.0 to 1.49, +++ increase of control of 1.5 or more
- decrease of control of .5 to .99, - - decrease of control of 1.0 to 1.49, - - - decrease of control of 1.5 or more

standard deviations (.16) for both "before 1989/90" and "currently", was perceived to exercise major control before and after the decentralization reform. The rest of the groups were perceived to have negligible control.

Item 2. The Location of a new School. Ministry headquarters with means of 4.76 and 4.68 was seen to exercise the highest degree of control over this decision item during both periods. However, respondents also indicated that the REO with a mean of 3.23, exercised a moderate degree of control at the time of the study, while the heads of schools, academic departments and teachers were perceived to exercise the least control over the decision item.

Items 3. Type of school to be built. Responses on this item indicated that ministry headquarters with means of 5.0 (before 1989/90) and 4.97 (after the reform) exercised major control, while the REO (2.08 & 2.37) were perceived to have some control. The rest of the groups were seen to have very little control.

Item 4. Whether an Addition should be made to an Existing School. The highest degree of control on this decision item was perceived to be exercised by ministry headquarters (4.95 & 4.90). The amount of control by the other groups was generally reported to be negligible.

Item 5. Renovation of a school. Respondents' generally indicated that ministry headquarters with mean scores of 4.63 for both periods, were perceived to exercise major control over this decision item, followed by the REO and heads of schools (3.17 & 3.32 respectively) perceived to have a moderate level of control at the time of the study. The academic department and teachers were perceived to have less control.

Discussion in Relation to Preferred Locus of Control

In the area of capital expenditures, ministry headquarters was perceived to have major control over all the decision items. REOs were perceived to have a moderate degree of control over the location of a new school and school renovations. Although respondents felt that heads of schools also had a moderate amount of control over school renovations, the school was generally perceived to have very little or negligible control over decisions in relation to capital expenditure. It is worth noting that the standard deviations for both periods were generally relatively low, indicating that there was a high level of agreement with respect to the degree of control exerted by individuals or educational levels over decision items in relation to this decision category. However, the standard deviations for the REO for both periods appear to be relatively high indicating a lower level of agreement among respondents. In relation to the location of a new school, the lower level of agreement suggests that most respondents may not have been aware of the key role that the REO's played in influencing this decision item during regional development committee meetings where such decisions are made.

Data on perceptions with respect to desired locus of control over these items are displayed in Table 6.04. An analysis of Table 6.04 reveals that the preferred locus of control over whether to build a new school was similar to the actual locus of control. Major differences were evident between perceptions of the actual degree and preferred locus of control over decisions on the location of a new school and renovation of a school. Although the results indicated that ministry headquarters was perceived to exercise the highest control over the location of a new school, respondents preferred that the REO (71.1%) should have major control over this matter. According to some administrators who were interviewed, the Regional Education Officer as a ministry representative of the regional development committee (RDC) negotiates with the committee on the location of a new school within the region. Hence, the general feeling that the REO should have a high degree of control over such a decision.

Respondents perceived that the Ministry had more control over decisions related to renovations of a school and addition to an existing school than was preferred. They perceived that heads of schools who have overall responsibility for the operation of a school had very little control over these decisions. Thus, respondents (71.8% & 54.1% respectively) felt that heads of schools should have greater control over these building changes.

Table 6.04

Preferred Locus of Control Over Decisions
on Capital Expenditure

Type of Decision	Levels of Decision Making											
	MHQ		REO		HOS		AD		Teachers		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Capital Expenditures												
1. Whether to build a new secondary school or not	26	68.4	12	31.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	38	100.0
2. The location of a new secondary school	11	28.9	27	71.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	38	100.0
3. What type of secondary school should be built	18	48.6	19	51.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	37	100.0
4. Whether an addition should be made to an existing secondary school or not	11	29.7	5	13.5	20	54.1	1	2.7	-	-	37	100.0
5. Renovation of a secondary school	6	16.2	3	8.1	28	71.8	-	-	-	-	37	100.0

MHQ = Ministry Headquarters; REO = Regional Education Office; HOS = Heads of Schools: AD = Academic Department

Respondents also preferred that more control should be exercised by the REO (51.4%), followed by ministry headquarters (48.6%) over decisions related to the type of school to be built. Overall, respondents perceived that professionals who worked in schools had very little control over this decision. Perhaps administrators felt that a conflict of interest might arise if school professionals had some control over this decision. Thus, actual power, authority and influence over the type of school to be built was largely concentrated at the regional and national levels.

These findings imply that some dissatisfaction may exist among administrators over the extent of ministry headquarters' control being exerted over capital expenditures on secondary education.

Equipment, Supplies and Services

Table 6.05 presents data on the perceived distribution of actual degree of control over equipment, supplies and services. Seven decision items were examined in this decision category.

Item 1. Maintenance of School Buildings. According to respondents, ministry headquarters with a mean of 4.71 had the highest degree of control over this decision item before the decentralization reform. However, at the time of the study, the Ministry (3.94), heads of schools (3.87) and REO (3.12) were perceived to share control over the decision.

Table 6.05

Degree of Control Exerted by Each Level Over Decisions
on Equipment, Supplies and Services

Type of Decision	Level	Degree of Control						Difference*
		Before 1989/90			Currently			
		Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N	
1. Maintenance of school buildings	MHQ	4.71	0.80	38	3.94	1.26	35	-0.77 +
	REO	1.85	1.02	34	3.12	1.45	34	1.27 ++
	HOS	2.09	1.12	35	3.87	1.14	34	1.78 +++
	AD	1.11	0.40	35	1.54	1.01	35	0.43
	Teachers	1.09	0.28	35	1.46	0.89	35	0.37
2. Provision of furniture	MHQ	4.95	0.23	38	4.62	0.83	37	-0.33
	REO	2.00	1.33	34	3.51	1.67	35	1.51 +++
	HOS	1.94	1.01	34	2.83	1.28	36	0.89 +
	AD	1.18	0.47	33	1.63	0.94	35	0.55 +
	Teachers	1.19	0.47	32	1.43	0.78	35	0.24
3. Textbooks to be used in subject areas	MHQ	4.87	0.42	37	4.24	1.36	37	-0.63 -
	REO	1.68	1.04	34	2.27	1.48	34	0.59 +
	HOS	2.40	1.50	35	3.40	1.70	35	1.00 ++
	AD	2.61	1.48	36	3.36	1.50	36	0.65 +
	Teachers	2.49	1.44	35	3.11	1.51	35	0.62 +
4. Provision of library books	MHQ	4.83	0.51	36	4.31	1.21	35	-0.52 -
	REO	1.42	0.71	33	2.15	1.50	34	0.73 +
	HOS	2.27	1.42	34	3.46	1.50	37	1.19 ++
	AD	1.88	1.18	34	2.69	1.37	36	0.81 +
	Teachers	1.76	1.23	33	2.37	1.44	35	0.61 +

Table 6.05 (continued)

		Degree of Control						
		Before 1989/90			Currently			
Type of Decision	Level	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Difference
5. Provision of school supplies	MHQ	**4.33**	1.37	36	**3.39**	1.57	36	**-0.94** -
	REO	**1.91**	1.12	32	**3.15**	1.48	34	**1.24** ++
	HOS	**2.91**	1.44	35	**4.27**	1.02	37	**1.36** ++
	AD	**1.84**	1.32	32	**2.79**	1.43	34	**1.47** ++
	Teachers	**1.53**	1.11	30	**2.39**	1.44	33	**0.86** +
6. Provision of school equipment	MHQ	**4.86**	0.42	36	**3.94**	1.39	36	**-0.92** -
	REO	**1.77**	0.99	34	**3.22**	1.48	36	**1.45** ++
	HOS	**2.49**	1.36	35	**3.76**	1.23	37	**1.27** ++
	AD	**1.61**	1.03	33	**2.62**	1.48	34	**1.01** ++
	Teachers	**1.32**	0.84	34	**2.11**	1.30	35	**0.79** +
7. Provision of transport	MHQ	**4.84**	0.60	37	**3.94**	1.39	34	**-0.90** -
	REO	**2.09**	1.16	33	**4.03**	1.24	34	**1.94** ++
	HOS	**1.70**	0.95	33	**3.74**	1.29	35	**2.04** +++
	AD	**1.15**	0.51	33	**1.41**	0.89	34	**0.26**
	Teachers	**1.09**	0.38	33	**1.18**	0.53	33	**0.09**

MHQ = Ministry Headquarters; REO = Regional Education Office; HOS = Heads of Schools: AD = Academic Department

The scale uses was: 1: Negligible Degree of Control, 2: Low Degree of Control, 3: Moderate Degree of Control
4: Considerable Degree of Control, 5: High Degree of Control

* + increase of control of .5 to .99, ++ increase of control of 1.0 to 1.49, +++ increase of control of 1.5 or more
- decrease of control of .5 to .99, - - decrease of control of 1.0 to 1.49, - - - decrease of control of 1.5 or more

Both the academic departments (1.11 & 1.54) and teachers (1.09 & 1.46) were perceived to exercise very little control over maintenance of the school buildings.

Item 2. Provision of Furniture. Respondents indicated that major control over this decision was perceived to be held largely by the ministry headquarters before and after the recent decentralization reform (4.95 & 4.62 respectively). The REO was seen to have gained a considerable degree of control at the time of the study (from 2.00 to 3.50). Heads of schools with a mean of 2.83 were perceived to have a moderate influence while some control remained with the academic departments and teachers.

Item 3. Deciding on Textbooks to be used in a Subject Area. Major control for this decision item was seen to lie with ministry headquarters (4.87 & 4.24). Heads of schools, academic departments and teachers were perceived to exercise moderate and considerable control before the reform and after the reform respectively. Respondents indicated that the REO exercised some control.

Item 4. Deciding on Provision of Library Books. Similarly, responses on this decision item indicated that ministry headquarters (4.83 & 4.31) exercised the highest degree of control, while moderate then considerable degree of control was also perceived to be held by heads of schools (2.27 & 3.46). The other groups were seen to have little then moderate control over the item.

Item 5. Deciding on Provision of School Supplies.

According to respondents, ministry headquarters, with a mean of 4.33, was perceived to exercise major control over this item before 1989/90. Heads of schools were seen to exercise moderate control and the rest of the levels had little control. However, at the time of the study, heads of schools were perceived to have major control while ministry headquarters and REO were seen to share considerable control over this area. Academic departments and teachers were perceived to exercise moderate control.

Item 6. Deciding on Provision of School Equipment. Similarly, respondents indicated that ministry headquarters (4.86) held the highest degree of control over this decision item before the recent decentralization reform. During the same period, the other groups were seen to exercise moderate (HOS) or little control. However, in 1994, respondents indicated that ministry headquarters (3.94), heads of schools (3.76) and REO (3.22) ware perceived to share control over decisions related to provision of school equipment. Academic departments and teachers were also perceived to share moderate control over the item.

Item 7. Deciding on Provision of Transport. For this decision item, major control was seen to be held by ministry headquarters (4.84), while the other groups were perceived to exercise some control before the reform. Respondents also perceived the REO (4.03) to exercise the highest degree of control over the decision after the reform. Ministry headquarters and heads of schools were seen to share considerable control. Academic departments and teachers were perceived to have little control.

Discussion in Relation to Preferred Locus of Control

The results indicated that ministry headquarters was perceived to have major control over all decision items in relation to provision of equipment, supplies and services for all government secondary schools before the recent educational decentralization reform. According to some respondents, it was believed that centralization of control over provision of equipment, supplies and services enabled the Ministry to purchase large volumes so as to create significant economies of scale. The respondents also noted that there were times when centralized control allowed greater mobility of resources to schools where they were most needed. Other respondents reported that with years centralized control became more problematic and frustrating for school professionals. One of the critical problems was lack of flexibility to acquire the resources the professionals wanted to do their jobs.

Overall, at the time of the study in 1994 (four years after the adoption of the decentralization reform), power, authority and influence over this decision category was widely distributed, although ministry headquarters was perceived to exercise major control over decisions pertaining to provision of furniture, textbooks to be used in subject areas and provision of library books. The REO was perceived to hold a higher degree of control over decisions on provision of transport and heads of schools were seen to hold major control over provision of supplies. A considerable degree of control was perceived to be shared by ministry headquarters, heads of schools and the REO over maintenance, and provision of equipment.

Table 6.06 presents results on respondents' perceptions on individuals or levels that should exercise major control over this decision category. The results reveal that respondents perceived that major control over decision item relating to maintenance (73.7%), supplies (64.1%), equipment (34.2%) and transport (45.9%) should be held by heads of schools. Respondents preferred that the REO (48.6%) should have more control over decisions on provision of furniture. According to the respondents, control over decisions pertaining to textbooks to be used in subject areas should be shared between heads of schools and academic departments. Although the results of actual control over decisions in this category indicated that ministry headquarters was perceived to exercise the highest degree of control over most items, respondents preferred that the ministry should have less control over the decision items.

These findings suggest that most respondents perceived decisions related equipment, supplies and services for a school a matter of local concern. One of the administrators who was interviewed found it odd that school administrators did not have much control over the furniture given to their

Table 6.06

Preferred Locus of Control Over Decisions
on Equipment, Supplies ans Services

Type of Decision	Levels of Decision Making											
	MHQ		REO		HOS		AD		Teachers		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Equipment, Supplies and Services												
1. Maintenance of school buildings	2	5.3	8	21.1	28	73.7	-	-	-	-	38	100.0
2. Provision of furniture	5	13.5	18	48.6	13	35.1	-	-	1	2.7	37	100.0
3. Textbooks to be used in subject areas	8	21.1	2	5.3	13	34.2	13	34.2	2	5.3	38	100.0
4. Provision of library books	8	22.9	7	20.0	11	31.4	8	22.9	1	2.9	35	100.0
5. Provision of school supplies	7	18.9	5	13.5	25	64.1	-	-	-	-	37	100.0
6. Provision of school equipment	12	31.6	8	21.1	13	34.2	5	13.2	-	-	38	100.0
7. Provision of transport	10	27.0	10	27.0	17	45.9	-	-	-	-	37	100.0

MHQ = Ministry Headquarters; REO = Regional Education Office; HOS = Heads of Schools: AD = Academic Department

schools. At the time of the study the maintenance team for all government schools was based in Blantyre at the International Development Aid (IDA) project office and was controlled by ministry headquarters. According to an interviewee, "this kind of set up is inefficient in terms of time and money. It delays dealing with repairs on time and in times of emergencies the ministry hires contractors to do the maintenance which can be very costly." A number of administrators expressed that headmasters and headmistresses are concerned about maintenance in their schools. Examples of such school maintenance needs mentioned frequently included painting, plumbing, replacement of shelves and window panes. It appears that, although heads of schools were perceived to have some control over maintenance, most of the administrators who were interviewed felt that heads did not direct the priorities for maintenance in their schools nor could they control the way their schools were maintained on a daily basis. Respondents also noted that although all government schools are cost centres, which gives the heads more control over the school budget, there is no approved allocation for maintenance on school budgets.

Although senior administrators indicated that under the new system, heads of schools can divert funds from one item to the other, the problem of flexibility seemed to be a major one for the school administrators interviewed. School administrators reported that they felt restricted by the ministry's financial management guidelines and parameters.

Curriculum and Instruction

Table 6.07 presents the perceived distribution of the actual degree of control over curriculum and instruction, as exercised by the five organizational levels. Five decision items were included in this category.

Item 1. Deciding on the methodology used in the classroom. Surprisingly, responses on this decision item indicated that ministry headquarters (4.33 then 4.11) was perceived to exercise the highest degree of control, followed by teachers (3.67 then 3.97). The academic department was perceived to have a moderate then considerable degree of control before and after the reform respectively. However, heads of schools maintained a moderate degree of control at the time of the reform. The REO was seen to hold the least amount of control.

Item 2. Deciding on Extra-curricular Activities. On this decision item, the administrators indicated that they saw heads of schools (4.24 then 4.50) as exercising major control, followed by teachers (3.87 then 4.24). The academic department (3.23 then 3.49) was seen to exercise considerable control, while the REO was perceived to have little control over this item.

Item 3. Deciding on Co-ordination of Instructional Activities. Responses on this item indicated that heads of schools (4.18 then 4.32) were perceived to exercise the highest degree of control. The academic department was seen to hold considerable degree before the reform, and a major

Table 6.07

Degree of Control Exerted by Each Level Over Decisions on Curriculum and Instruction

		Degree of Control						
		Before 1989/90			Currently			
Type of Decision	Level	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Difference*
1. The methodology used in the classroom	MHQ	**4.33**	1.22	36	**4.11**	1.37	36	**-0.22**
	REO	**1.47**	0.96	34	**1.77**	1.10	34	**0.30**
	HOS	**2.76**	1.32	33	**3.00**	1.37	33	**0.24**
	AD	**2.97**	1.44	36	**3.50**	1.34	36	**0.53** +
	Teachers	**3.67**	1.62	36	**3.97**	1.52	36	**0.30**
2. Extra-curricular activities	MHQ	**2.14**	1.50	36	**2.09**	1.36	35	**-0.05**
	REO	**1.33**	0.59	36	**1.49**	0.74	35	**0.16**
	HOS	**4.24**	1.16	37	**4.50**	1.06	36	**0.26**
	AD	**3.23**	1.59	35	**3.49**	1.52	35	**0.26**
	Teachers	**3.87**	1.38	38	**4.24**	1.13	38	**0.37**
3. Co-ordination of instructional activities	MHQ	**3.76**	1.52	33	**3.70**	1.47	33	**-0.06**
	REO	**2.23**	1.26	31	**2.74**	1.36	30	**0.51** +
	HOS	**4.18**	1.24	33	**4.32**	1.07	34	**0.14**
	AD	**3.74**	1.38	34	**4.14**	1.10	36	**0.40**
	Teachers	**2.94**	1.75	31	**3.09**	1.61	33	**0.15**
4. Curriculum content for a subject area	MHQ	**4.68**	0.87	38	**4.68**	0.87	38	**0.00**
	REO	**1.58**	1.12	33	**1.94**	1.32	34	**0.36**
	HOS	**2.35**	1.45	34	**2.50**	1.52	34	**0.15**
	AD	**2.52**	1.48	33	**2.91**	1.59	33	**0.39**
	Teachers	**2.64**	1.58	33	**2.94**	1.60	33	**0.30**

Table 6.07 (continued)

Type of Decision	Level	Degree of Control						
		Before 1989/90			Currently			Difference*
		Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N	
5. Evaluating an instructional program	MHQ	**4.71**	0.57	35	**4.69**	0.83	35	**-0.02**
	REO	**2.13**	1.41	32	**2.75**	1.50	32	**0.62** +
	HOS	**3.12**	1.34	34	**3.27**	1.38	34	**0.15**
	AD	**2.79**	1.51	34	**3.23**	1.50	35	**0.44**
	Teachers	**2.85**	1.78	34	**3.24**	1.71	33	**0.39**

MHQ = Ministry Headquarters; REO = Regional Education Office; HOS = Heads of Schools: AD = Academic Department

The scale uses was: 1: Negligible Degree of Control
2: Low Degree of Control
3: Moderate Degree of Control
4: Considerable Degree of Control
5: High Degree of Control

* + increase of control of .5 to .99, ++ increase of control of 1.0 to 1.49, +++ increase of control of 1.5 or more
- decrease of control of .5 to .99, - - decrease of control of 1.0 to 1.49, - - - decrease of control of 1.5 or more

degree of control at the time of the study. A moderate amount of control was perceived to be exercised by teachers and the REO.

Item 4. Deciding on the Curriculum Content for a Subject Area. According to respondents, ministry headquarters with means of 4.68 for both periods, was perceived to exercise major control over this decision item. Teachers, heads of schools and the academic department were seen to exercise moderate control while the REO was perceived to hold the least amount of control.

Item 5. Deciding on Evaluating an Instructional Program. Again, responses on this decision item indicated that the Ministry was perceived to exert the highest degree of control. The rest of the groups were seen to exercise moderate control.

Discussion in Relation to Preferred Locus of Control

The results indicated that once more ministry headquarters had the highest degree of control over three out of the five items in this decision category. These included instructional methods, curriculum content and instructional program evaluation. Respondents generally perceived the REO to have the least amount of control over these decision items.

Table 6.08 presents the distribution of the preferred locus of control over decision items in relation to curriculum and instruction in secondary schools. Analysis

Table 6.08

Preferred Locus of Control Over Decisions
on Curriculum and Instruction

Type of Decision	Levels of Decision Making											
	MHQ		REO		HOS		AD		Teachers		Total	
Curriculum and Instruction	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1. The methodology used in the classroom	7	18.4	4	10.5	2	5.3	12	31.6	13	34.2	38	100.0
2. Extra-curricular activities	-	-	-	-	21	55.3	4	10.5	13	34.2	38	100.0
3. Co-ordination of instructional activities	3	8.3	4	11.1	14	38.9	15	41.7	-	-	36	100.0
4. Curriculum content for a subject area	17	45.9	-	-	3	8.1	13	35.1	4	10.8	37	100.0
5. Evaluating an instructional program	14	36.8	5	13.2	5	13.2	9	23.7	5	13.2	38	100.0

MHQ = Ministry Headquarters; REO = Regional Education Office; HOS = Heads of Schools: AD = Academic Department

of the results in table 6.08 reveals that the status quo was generally acceptable for decisions related to curriculum content and instructional program evaluation. However, responses indicated that control over the methods used in the classroom should be shared by teachers (33.3%) and the academic department (30.8%). And that MHQ should have much less to say about this. Overall, the findings appear to imply that teachers did not have full professional autonomy in the classroom with respect to instructional methodology.

Regarding extra-curricular activities, heads of schools and teachers were perceived to share a high degree of control, while the academic department was perceived to have a considerable degree of control. Heads of schools were also seen to share a high degree of control over co-ordination of instructional activities with the academic department. According to the results on table 6.08, the status quo was acceptable on these decision items.

Personnel Management

Table 6.09 presents the distribution of respondents' perceptions as to the actual degree of control over personnel management, as exercised by the five organizational levels. Seven decision items were examined in this decision category. In all cases, except for one, control was perceived to be exercised by ministry headquarters.

Item 1. Appointment of Heads of Schools. Responses on

Table 6.09

Degree of Control Exerted by Each Level over Decisions
on Personnel Management

		Degree of Control						
		Before 1989/90			Currently			
Type of Decision	Level	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Difference*
1. The appointment of Heads of schools	MHQ	**4.85**	0.71	39	**4.87**	0.47	39	**0.02**
	REO	**1.68**	1.12	38	**2.14**	1.51	37	**0.46**
	HOS	**1.28**	0.71	36	**1.38**	0.76	37	**0.10**
	AD	**1.06**	0.24	35	**1.08**	0.28	37	**0.02**
	Teachers	**1.00**	0.00	36	**1.00**	0.00	36	**0.00**
2. The appointment of Heads of Departments	MHQ	**2.21**	1.64	33	**3.54**	1.75	33	**1.33** ++
	REO	**1.32**	0.95	31	**1.44**	1.11	32	**0.12**
	HOS	**4.06**	1.57	34	**3.50**	1.71	36	**-0.56** -
	AD	**1.58**	1.18	31	**1.58**	0.18	31	**0.00**
	Teachers	**1.59**	1.16	32	**1.63**	1.24	32	**0.04**
3. Selection and posting of new teachers	MHQ	**4.97**	0.16	39	**4.97**	0.16	39	**0.00**
	REO	**1.84**	1.31	38	**2.42**	1.52	38	**0.58** +
	HOS	**1.65**	1.11	37	**1.97**	1.28	37	**0.28**
	AD	**1.32**	0.85	37	**1.35**	0.79	37	**0.03**
	Teachers	**1.08**	0.63	37	**1.08**	0.63	37	**0.00**
4. Teaching assignments at a school	MHQ	**1.92**	1.48	36	**2.06**	1.49	35	**0.14**
	REO	**1.34**	0.94	35	**1.49**	1.12	35	**0.15**
	HOS	**4.47**	0.98	38	**4.59**	0.94	39	**0.12**
	AD	**3.12**	1.38	38	**3.79**	1.07	38	**0.67** +
	Teachers	**2.35**	1.61	38	**2.81**	1.58	37	**0.53** +

Table 6.09 (continued)

Type of Decision	Level	Degree of Control						Difference*
		Before 1989/90			Currently			
		Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N	
5. Staff discipline	MHQ	**4.73**	0.65	37	**4.49**	1.02	37	**-0.24**
	REO	**2.31**	1.30	35	**3.22**	1.28	36	**0.89** +
	HOS	**4.19**	0.94	37	**4.46**	0.69	37	**0.27**
	AD	**2.11**	1.19	36	**2.43**	1.22	35	**0.32**
	Teachers	**1.41**	0.99	34	**1.41**	1.05	34	**0.00**
6. In-service training for teachers	MHQ	**4.95**	0.23	38	**4.92**	0.28	37	**-0.03**
	REO	**1.83**	1.18	36	**2.64**	1.42	36	**0.79** +
	HOS	**1.89**	1.04	36	**2.60**	1.36	37	**0.71** +
	AD	**1.47**	0.74	36	**2.06**	1.19	36	**0.59** +
	Teachers	**1.20**	0.63	35	**1.37**	0.94	35	**0.17**
7. Teacher evaluation procedures	MHQ	**4.82**	0.56	38	**4.72**	0.66	36	**-0.10**
	REO	**2.00**	1.28	36	**2.87**	1.57	37	**0.87** +
	HOS	**3.14**	1.36	37	**3.74**	1.31	38	**0.60** +
	AD	**2.11**	1.40	37	**2.87**	1.40	37	**0.76** +
	Teachers	**1.39**	0.90	36	**1.65**	1.09	37	**0.26**

MHQ = Ministry Headquarters; REO = Regional Education Office; HOS = Heads of Schools: AD = Academic Department

The scale uses was: 1: Negligible Degree of Control
2: Low Degree of Control
3: Moderate Degree of Control
4: Considerable Degree of Control
5: High Degree of Control

* + increase of control of .5 to .99, ++ increase of control of 1.0 to 1.49, +++ increase of control of 1.5 or more
- decrease of control of .5 to .99, - - decrease of control of 1.0 to 1.49, - - - decrease of control of 1.5 or more

this decision item indicated that ministry headquarters with means of 4.85 and 4.87 was perceived to have the highest degree of control both before and after the decentralization reform. The rest of the groups were seen to exercise some control.

Item 2. Appointment of Heads of Departments. In this item, before the reform, heads of schools (4.06) were seen to have major control. At the time of the study in 1994, control was perceived to be shared by ministry headquarters (3.54) and heads of schools (3.50). The rest of the groups had little control over this item.

Item 3. Selection and Posting of New Teachers. Ministry headquarters (4.97) was perceived to have major control while the rest of the groups were seen to have little control over this decision item during both periods.

Item 4. Teaching Assignment at a School. According to respondents, heads of schools (4.47 & 4.57) were perceived to exercise the highest degree of control over this decision item, during both periods, followed by academic departments (3.12 & 3.79). Moderate control was seen to be held by teachers and ministry headquarters, and only little by the REO.

Item 5. Staff Discipline. Responses on this decision item indicated that ministry headquarters (4.73 & 4.49) and heads of schools (4.19 & 4.46) were seen to have major control. At the time of the study, the REO was perceived to exercise considerable control. Moderate control was held by academic departments while teachers had little control.

Item 6. In-service Training for Teachers. Ministry headquarters (4.95 & 4.92) was seen to have major control over this decision item. Although the REO, heads of schools and academic departments were perceived to exercise a moderate degree of control at the time of the study, teachers had little control.

Item 7. Teacher Evaluation Procedures. Again, ministry headquarters seemed to be dominate with a considerable degree of control held by heads of schools. Moderate control was held by the REO and academic departments while little control was exercised by teachers themselves.

Discussion in Relation to Preferred Locus of Control

According to the above analysis, the highest degree of control over personnel management, at the time of the study, was exercised by ministry headquarters, except for teaching assignments at a school which were seen to be controlled by heads of schools.

Respondents' preferences with respect to locus of control as presented in table 6.10 were similar to the actual locus of control over the appointment of heads of schools, appointment of heads of departments and teaching assignments at a school. However, a difference was evident between perceptions of the actual and preferred control over four decision items. Although the results indicated that ministry headquarters was perceived to exercise major

Table 6.10

Preferred Locus of Control Over Decisions
on Personnel Management

Type of Decision	Levels of Decision Making											
	MHQ		REO		HOS		AD		Teachers		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Personnel Management												
1. The appointment of heads of schools	24	64.9	12	32.4	1	2.7	-	-	-	-	37	100.0
2. The appointment of heads of departments	8	24.2	3	9.1	22	66.7	-	-	-	-	33	100.0
3. Selection and posting of new teachers	14	37.8	20	54.1	3	8.1	-	-	-	-	37	100.0
4. Teaching assignments at a school	-	-	2	5.7	20	57.1	10	28.6	3	8.6	35	100.0
5. Staff discipline	2	5.6	5	13.8	28	77.8	1	2.8	-	-	36	100.0
6. In-service training for teachers	11	29.7	11	29.7	11	29.7	4	10.8	-	-	37	100.0
7. Teacher evaluation procedures	6	16.2	5	13.5	22	59.5	4	10.3	-	-	37	100.0

MHQ = Ministry Headquarters; REO = Regional Education Office; HOS = Heads of Schools: AD = Academic Department

control over the appointment of heads of departments, selection and posting of new teachers, staff discipline, and teacher evaluation procedures, respondents preferred that ministry headquarters should have no control. Respondents indicated that major control over selection and posting of new teachers should be exercised by the REO and control over the other two items should be exercised by heads of schools.

Student Management

Table 6.11 presents the distribution of participants' perceptions of the actual degree of control over student management, as exercised by individuals and organizational levels. Eight decision items were examined in this decision category.

Item 1. Standards for Student Conduct. Respondents indicated that heads of schools were perceived to have the highest degree of control over student conduct. Considerable to moderate degrees of control were seen to be held by the rest of the groups.

Item 2. Procedures for Assessing Student Progress. According to respondents, control over this decision item was perceived to be shared by teachers (4.41 & 4.51), heads of schools (4.36 & 4.56), and academic departments (3.97 & 4.14) both before the decentralization reform and at the time of the study. A moderate level of control was perceived to be held by ministry headquarters, while some control was held by the REO.

Table 6.11

Degree of Control Exerted by Each Level Over Decisions
on Student Management

Type of Decision	Level	Degree of Control						Difference*
		Before 1989/90			Currently			
		Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N	
1. Standards for student conduct	MHQ	3.94	1.59	35	3.83	1.52	35	-0.11
	REO	2.06	1.32	34	2.61	1.52	33	0.55 +
	HOS	4.31	1.14	36	4.56	0.88	36	0.25
	AD	2.85	1.40	34	3.09	1.42	33	0.24
	Teachers	3.06	1.56	34	3.30	1.51	33	0.24
2. Procedures for assessing student progress	MHQ	2.43	1.54	35	2.37	1.37	35	-0.06
	REO	1.51	0.78	35	1.54	0.58	35	0.03
	HOS	4.36	0.96	36	4.56	0.65	36	0.20
	AD	3.97	1.22	34	4.14	1.12	35	0.17
	Teachers	4.41	1.21	34	4.51	1.07	35	0.10
3. Student progress reporting procedure	MHQ	2.25	1.34	32	2.15	1.23	33	-0.10
	REO	1.28	0.58	32	1.52	0.87	33	0.24
	HOS	4.61	0.77	36	4.75	0.50	36	0.14
	AD	3.68	1.25	34	3.86	1.24	35	0.18
	Teachers	3.65	1.39	34	3.91	1.27	35	0.26
4. School discipline procedures	MHQ	4.43	1.09	35	4.38	0.96	34	-0.05
	REO	2.23	1.37	35	2.74	1.48	35	0.51 +
	HOS	4.19	1.15	37	4.65	0.59	37	0.46
	AD	2.72	1.47	36	3.09	1.40	36	0.37
	Teachers	3.19	1.49	36	3.42	1.38	36	0.23

Table 6.11 (continued)

Type of Decision	Level	Degree of Control						
		Before 1989/90			Currently			
		Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Difference*
5. Expulsion of students	MHQ	**5.00**	0.00	37	**5.00**	0.00	37	**0.00**
	REO	**1.54**	1.01	35	**1.89**	1.28	35	**0.35**
	HOS	**2.97**	1.34	36	**3.22**	1.38	36	**0.25**
	AD	**1.72**	1.11	36	**1.77**	1.22	35	**0.05**
	Teachers	**1.89**	1.12	36	**2.03**	1.23	36	**0.14**
6. J.C.E. examinations	MHQ	**4.72**	0.94	36	**3.81**	1.58	36	**-0.89** -
	REO	**1.68**	1.25	34	**1.61**	1.09	33	**-0.07**
	HOS	**2.20**	1.47	35	**2.21**	1.39	34	**0.01**
	AD	**1.69**	1.16	35	**1.68**	1.15	34	**-0.01**
	Teachers	**1.89**	1.37	35	**1.82**	1.31	34	**-0.07**
7. M.C.E. examinations	MHQ	**3.83**	1.60	36	**3.83**	1.56	35	**0.00**
	REO	**1.56**	0.96	34	**1.66**	1.10	32	**0.10**
	HOS	**2.20**	1.51	35	**2.31**	1.61	35	**0.11**
	AD	**1.77**	1.26	35	**1.86**	1.31	35	**0.09**
	Teachers	**1.89**	1.32	35	**1.89**	1.32	35	**0.00**
8. Student promotions to the next form	MHQ	**3.03**	1.86	37	**3.08**	1.86	36	**0.05**
	REO	**1.27**	0.73	37	**1.28**	0.74	36	**0.01**
	HOS	**3.75**	1.61	36	**3.75**	1.61	36	**0.00**
	AD	**3.00**	1.67	37	**3.08**	1.63	36	**0.08**
	Teachers	**3.24**	1.77	37	**3.33**	1.74	36	**0.09**

MHQ = Ministry Headquarters; REO = Regional Education Office; HOS = Heads of Schools: AD = Academic Department

The scale uses was: 1: Negligible Degree of Control; 2: Low Degree of Control; 3: Moderate Degree of Control; 4: Considerable Degree of Control; 5: High Degree of Control

* + increase of control of .5 to .99, ++ increase of control of 1.0 to 1.49, +++ increase of control of 1.5 or more
- decrease of control of .5 to .99, - - decrease of control of 1.0 to 1.49, - - - decrease of control of 1.5 or more

Item 3. Student Progress Reporting Procedure. The highest degree of control was seen to be exercised by heads of schools (4.61 & 4.75) during both periods. Academic departments and teachers were perceived to hold a considerable degree of control, moderate control was seen to be held by ministry headquarters, and the REO was perceived to have the some control.

Item 4. School Discipline Procedures. Respondents indicated that major control over this decision item was perceived to be shared by ministry headquarters (4.43 & 4.38) and heads of schools (4.19 & 4.65). The rest of the groups were seen to hold considerable or moderate degrees of control.

Item 5. Expulsion of Students. For this item, all respondents indicated that ministry headquarters (5.0) exercised a major degree of control, followed by heads of schools (2.97 & 3.22). Other groups were perceived to have moderate to little control.

Items 6 and 7. Junior Certificate of Education (J.C.E.) and Malawi Certificate of Education (M.C.E.) Examinations. Again, responses on these decision items indicated that the highest degree of control was held by ministry headquarters for both periods. Moderate control was seen to be held by heads of schools, while the rest of the groups were perceived to exercise little control over J.C.E and M.C.E examinations.

Item 8. Student Promotion to the Next Form. On this decision item, control was seen to be shared by all groups with the REO perceived to have some control.

Discussion in Relation to Preferred Locus of Control

The results indicated that at the time of the study, ministry headquarters and heads of schools were perceived to have major control over six out of the eight decision items included in the student management category. On two of the decision items (student discipline and student promotion to the next form), heads of schools were perceived to share considerable control with teachers and academic departments and ministry headquarters. A wide distribution of power, authority and influence was evident on both decisions. The REO was perceived to have little control over decision items in this category. Overall, power, authority and influence over the student management category was concentrated at the levels of the heads' office and ministry headquarters.

According to respondents' preferences with respect to locus of control as presented in Table 6.12, the status quo was acceptable. However, it is worth noting that although the results indicated that academic departments and teachers were perceived to have some control over J.C.E and M.C.E. examinations, respondents preferred that the two groups should have no control. In general, these findings imply that administrators were satisfied with the distribution of control over the decisions.

Table 6.12

Preferred Locus of Control Over Decisions
on Student Management

Type of Decision	Levels of Decision Making											
	MHQ		REO		HOS		AD		Teachers		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Student Management												
1. Standards for student conduct	3	8.1	2	5.4	28	75.7	2	5.4	2	5.4	37	100.0
2. Procedures for assessing student progress	2	5.4	-	-	18	48.6	13	35.1	4	10.8	37	100.0
3. Student progress reporting procedure	1	2.8	-	-	23	63.9	7	19.4	5	13.9	36	100.0
4. School discipline procedures	2	5.3	3	7.9	30	78.9	-	-	3	7.9	38	100.0
5. Expulsion of students	16	43.2	7	17.9	14	37.8	-	-	-	-	37	100.0
6. J.C.E. examinations	23	67.6	5	14.7	5	14.7	1	2.9	-	-	34	100.0
7. M.C.E. examinations	25	73.5	3	8.8	5	14.7	1	2.9	-	-	34	100.0
8. Student promotions to the next form	2	5.3	-	-	20	52.6	8	21.1	8	21.1	38	100.0

MHQ = Ministry Headquarters; REO = Regional Education Office; HOS = Heads of Schools: AD = Academic Department

Organizational Structure

Four decision items were included in the organizational structure category. Table 6.13 presents data on the distribution of the actual degree of control over this decision area, as exercised by the five organizational levels.

Item 1. Number of Staff Required in a School. Responses on this decision item indicated that ministry headquarters (4.84) was perceived to exercise a major degree of control, while heads were perceived to exercise a considerable degree of control (3.03 & 3.39) both before the recent decentralization reform and at the time of the study. Academic departments were perceived to have moderate control (2.06 & 2.33) while the REO was seen to exercise little control before 1989/90 and moderate control in 1994. Teachers were seen to have the least amount of control.

Item 2. Timetable or Lesson Schedule for a School. Heads of schools (4.76 & 4.79) reportedly held major control over this decision item with considerable control being held by academic departments (3.72 & 3.87). A moderate degree of control was perceived to reside with teachers and ministry headquarters, with little control held by the REO.

Item 3. Minimum and Maximum Instructional Time for Each Subject. On this decision, all respondents perceived ministry headquarters (5.0) to have major control. Other groups were perceived to have some control over instructional time.

Table 6.13

Degree of Control Exerted by Each Level Over Decisions
on Organizational Structure

Type of Decision	Level	Degree of Control						Difference*
		Before 1989/90			Currently			
		Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N	
1. The number of staff required in a school	MHQ	**4.84**	0.73	37	**4.84**	0.69	37	**0.00**
	REO	**1.77**	1.09	35	**2.34**	1.33	35	**0.57** +
	HOS	**3.03**	1.56	36	**3.39**	1.46	36	**0.36**
	AD	**2.06**	1.35	36	**2.33**	1.47	36	**0.27**
	Teachers	**1.44**	0.84	36	**1.64**	1.05	36	**0.20**
2. Timetable or lesson schedule for a school	MHQ	**2.77**	1.60	35	**2.80**	1.62	35	**0.03**
	REO	**1.40**	0.78	35	**1.40**	0.78	35	**0.00**
	HOS	**4.76**	0.73	37	**4.79**	0.47	38	**0.03**
	AD	**3.72**	1.30	36	**3.87**	1.21	37	**0.15**
	Teachers	**2.83**	1.42	35	**2.97**	1.42	36	**0.14**
3. Minimum and maximum instructional time for each subject	MHQ	**5.00**	0.00	37	**5.00**	0.00	37	**0.00**
	REO	**1.38**	0.68	37	**1.50**	0.88	36	**0.12**
	HOS	**2.05**	1.22	37	**2.19**	1.24	37	**0.14**
	AD	**1.49**	0.70	35	**1.60**	0.81	35	**0.11**
	Teachers	**1.31**	0.72	35	**1.37**	0.77	35	**0.06**

Table 6.13 (continued)

Type of Decision	Level	Degree of Control						
		Before 1989/90			Currently			
		Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Difference*
4. Minimum and maximum class sizes in a school	MHQ	**4.90**	0.51	38	**4.84**	0.60	37	**-0.06**
	REO	**1.58**	1.00	36	**1.78**	1.20	36	**0.20**
	HOS	**2.25**	1.44	36	**2.62**	1.62	37	**0.37**
	AD	**1.60**	1.17	37	**1.73**	1.28	37	**0.13**
	Teachers	**1.46**	1.07	37	**1.51**	1.12	37	**0.05**

MHQ = Ministry Headquarters; REO = Regional Education Office; HOS = Heads of Schools: AD = Academic Department

The scale uses was: 1: Negligible Degree of Control
2: Low Degree of Control
3: Moderate Degree of Control
4: Considerable Degree of Control
5: High Degree of Control

* + increase of control of .5 to .99, ++ increase of control of 1.0 to 1.49, +++ increase of control of 1.5 or more
- decrease of control of .5 to .99, - - decrease of control of 1.0 to 1.49, - - - decrease of control of 1.5 or more

Item 4. Minimum and Maximum Class Size in a School. Again, ministry headquarters was perceived to exercise major control (4.90 & 4.84) over this decision item, with moderate control being held by heads of schools (2.25 & 2.62). The rest of the groups were seen to have little control.

Discussion in Relation to Preferred Locus of Control

Overall, the results indicated that major control over decisions relating to school organizational structure was perceived to be held largely by ministry headquarters. Heads of schools were perceived to exercise major control over the school timetable. Academic departments were perceived to exercise considerable control over this item while moderate control was seen to reside with teachers. In this regard, the professional autonomy of the teacher was very limited with respect to the timetable or lesson schedule. This may be expected largely because of the heads' overall responsibility for the operation of a school.

Although all groups were seen to have some control over decision items in this category, the REO was perceived to have the least amount of control.

Table 6.14 presents the results of respondents' perceptions as to preferred locus of control of items in the school organizational structure category. According to the responses, the preferred loci of control were quite similar to the actual loci of control for two decision item, school timetable or lesson schedule and instructional time.

Table 6.14

Preferred Locus of Control Over Decisions
on Organizational Structure

Type of Decision	Levels of Decision Making											
	MHQ		REO		HOS		AD		Teachers		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Organizational Structure												
1. The number of staff required in a school	4	11.1	1	2.8	30	83.3	1	5.4	2	2.8	36	100.0
2. Timetable or lesson schedule for a school	3	8.1	1	2.7	27	73.0	6	16.2	-	-	37	100.0
3. Minimum and maximum instructional time for each subject	19	51.4	-	-	9	24.3	9	24.3	-	-	37	100.0
4. Minimum and maximum class sizes in a school	13	34.2	2	5.3	21	55.3	1	2.6	1	2.6	38	100.0

MHQ = Ministry Headquarters; REO = Regional Education Office; HOS = Heads of Schools: AD = Academic Department

However, remarkable differences were evident on the other two items. Although the results indicated that ministry headquarters was perceived to exercise major control over these items, respondents preferred that heads of schools should have the highest degree of control. These findings suggest that although administrators were satisfied with the actual loci of control over timetable or lesson schedule and instructional time, they preferred a shift in the loci of control over school staffing and class size.

Of particular interest is that, although teachers were perceived to exercise some control over school timetable and instruction time, respondents felt that they should have no control at all over these decision items.

Community Relations

Table 6.15 presents distribution of participants' perceptions of the actual degree of control over community relations as exercised by individuals or organizational levels. Three decision items were included in this category.

Item 1. Parental and Community Involvement in School Activities. According to respondents, heads of schools exercised major control (4.42 & 4.53) over this decision item for both periods. Teachers and academic departments were perceived to exercise moderate control, while ministry headquarters and the REO were seen to have little control over parental and community involvement.

Table 6.15

Degree of Control Exerted by Each Level Over Decisions
on Community Relations

Type of Decision	Level	Degree of Control						Difference*
		Before 1989/90			Currently			
		Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N	
1. Involving parents and the community in school activities	MHQ	**1.97**	1.26	37	**1.92**	1.18	36	**-0.05**
	REO	**1.81**	1.24	36	**1.94**	1.31	36	**0.13**
	HOS	**4.42**	0.95	38	**4.53**	0.76	38	**0.11**
	AD	**2.14**	1.31	35	**2.31**	1.33	36	**0.27**
	Teachers	**2.32**	1.41	34	**2.61**	1.48	36	**0.29**
2. Relating to other schools and colleges	MHQ	**2.03**	1.32	35	**2.03**	1.34	34	**0.00**
	REO	**1.57**	0.85	35	**1.79**	1.07	34	**0.22**
	HOS	**4.61**	0.79	38	**4.79**	0.53	38	**0.18**
	AD	**2.91**	1.46	35	**3.05**	1.43	37	**0.14**
	Teachers	**2.70**	1.59	33	**2.82**	1.56	35	**0.12**
3. The use of a school building by community groups	MHQ	**3.00**	1.72	36	**2.43**	1.39	37	**-0.57** -
	REO	**1.59**	0.89	34	**1.85**	1.12	33	**0.26**
	HOS	**4.68**	0.82	37	**4.90**	0.31	38	**0.22**
	AD	**2.03**	1.34	35	**2.17**	1.45	35	**0.14**
	Teachers	**1.83**	1.27	35	**2.06**	1.39	35	**0.23**

MHQ = Ministry Headquarters; REO = Regional Education Office; HOS = Heads of Schools: AD = Academic Department

The scale uses was: 1: Negligible Degree of Control; 2: Low Degree of Control; 3: Moderate Degree of Control; 4: Considerable Degree of Control;
5: High Degree of Control

* + increase of control of .5 to .99, ++ increase of control of 1.0 to 1.49, +++ increase of control of 1.5 or more
- decrease of control of .5 to .99, - - decrease of control of 1.0 to 1.49, - - - decrease of control of 1.5 or more

Item 2. Relating to Other Schools and Colleges. Respondents indicated that control over this decision was held by heads of schools (4.61 & 4.79) for both periods, while moderate control was shared by academic departments, teachers and ministry headquarters. The REO was perceived to have little control over this decision.

Item 3. The Use of a School Building by Community Groups. Again, heads of schools (4.68 & 4.90) were perceived to exercise major control over this decision item for both periods. Ministry headquarters, academic departments and teachers were seen to have moderate control, while the REO had the least control.

Discussion in Relation to Preferred Locus of Control

For items dealing with school community relations, heads of schools were seen to have major control over all decision items. Moderate control was perceived to be shared by academic departments, teachers and ministry headquarters, while the REO exercised the least control.

According to the findings presented in table 6.16, the status quo was generally acceptable regarding secondary school community relations. These findings suggest that respondents were satisfied with the actual loci of control over items in this decision category.

Table 6.16

Preferred Locus of Control Over Decisions
on Community Relations

Type of Decision	Levels of Decision Making											
	MHQ		REO		HOS		AD		Teachers		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Community Relations												
1. Involving parents and the community in school activities	-	-	2	5.1	34	91.9	1	2.7	-	-	37	100.0
2. Relating to other schools and colleges	2	5.6	1	2.8	29	80.6	4	11.1	-	-	36	100.0
3. The use of a school building by community groups	-	-	1	2.6	36	97.3	-	-	-	-	37	100.0

MHQ = Ministry Headquarters; REO = Regional Education Office; HOS = Heads of Schools: AD = Academic Department

Policy Making and Decision Making

Table 6.17 presents the distribution of respondents' perceptions of the actual degree of control over policy making and decision making, as exercised by individuals or organizational levels. Three decision items were included in this category.

Item 1. School policies. Major control over this decision item was perceived to be exercised by ministry headquarters (4.53 & 4.51) for both periods, while considerable control was seen to be held by heads of schools. The rest of the groups were seen to exercise moderate control over school policies.

Item 2. National school policies. On this decision item respondents unanimously indicated that ministry headquarters (5.00) was perceived to exercise major control. The rest of the groups were seen to have little control before the recent educational reform. However, at the time of the study, the REO and heads of schools were perceived to exercise a moderate degree of control over national school policies.

Item 3. School philosophy. Responses on this decision item indicated that heads of schools (4.06 & 4.17) were perceived to exercise the highest degree of control, while ministry headquarters, teachers and academic departments shared moderate degrees of control.

Table 6.17

Degree of Control Exerted by Each Level Over Decisions on Policy Making

Type of Decision	Level	Degree of Control						Difference*
		Before 1989/90			Currently			
		Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N	
1. School policies (Professional development, field trips)	MHQ	**4.53**	1.03	36	**4.51**	1.01	35	**-0.02**
	REO	**2.15**	1.21	34	**2.74**	1.33	34	**0.59** +
	HOS	**3.06**	1.41	36	**3.66**	1.34	38	**0.60** +
	AD	**2.25**	1.30	36	**2.51**	1.35	37	**0.26**
	Teachers	**2.06**	1.29	36	**2.22**	1.40	37	**0.16**
2. National school policies	MHQ	**5.00**	0.00	37	**5.00**	0.00	38	**0.00**
	REO	**1.97**	1.16	36	**2.86**	1.29	35	**0.89** +
	HOS	**1.67**	0.89	36	**2.03**	1.06	36	**0.36**
	AD	**1.37**	0.69	35	**1.51**	0.81	35	**0.14**
	Teachers	**1.20**	0.43	35	**1.37**	0.69	35	**0.17**
3. School philosophy	MHQ	**3.15**	1.71	34	**3.15**	1.73	34	**0.00**
	REO	**1.84**	1.19	32	**2.03**	1.30	31	**0.19**
	HOS	**4.06**	1.37	35	**4.17**	1.34	35	**0.11**
	AD	**3.00**	1.37	34	**3.12**	1.32	33	**0.12**
	Teachers	**3.09**	1.36	33	**3.21**	1.36	33	**0.12**

MHQ = Ministry Headquarters; REO = Regional Education Office; HOS = Heads of Schools: AD = Academic Department

The scale uses was: 1: Negligible Degree of Control; 2: Low Degree of Control; 3: Moderate Degree of Control; 4: Considerable Degree of Control; 5: High Degree of Control

* + increase of control of .5 to .99, ++ increase of control of 1.0 to 1.49, +++ increase of control of 1.5 or more
- decrease of control of .5 to .99, - - decrease of control of 1.0 to 1.49, - - - decrease of control of 1.5 or more

Discussion in Relation to Preferred Locus of Control

The results indicated that ministry headquarters was perceived to have major control over two decision items: school policies (e.g. professional development and field trips) and national school policies. Although power, authority and influence over the national policies was to some extent distributed to all groups, ministry headquarters' control was perceived to be dominant. These results suggest that ministry headquarters was at the centre of power and had almost exclusive control over national and school policies.

Heads of schools were seen to exercise major control over the school philosophy, with considerable control resting with three other groups. The REO was perceived to have the least amount of control both before 1989/90 and after the reform.

Table 6.18 presents data on respondents' perceptions of individual or organizational levels that should exercise major control over items in the school policy making and decision making category. According to the responses, the preferred loci of control were perceived to be quite similar to the actual loci of control, except with respect to school policies. Respondents preferred that heads of schools should have major control over school policies. Overall, the results suggest that respondents were satisfied with decisions regarding policy making being controlled by heads of schools and ministry headquarters.

Table 6.18

Preferred Locus of Control Over Decisions
on Policy Making

Type of Decision	Levels of Decision Making											
	MHQ		REO		HOS		AD		Teachers		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Policy Making and Decision Making affecting Secondary Schools												
1. School policies (professional development, field trips)	7	18.4	5	13.2	23	60.5	2	5.3	1	2.6	38	100.0
2. National school policies	36	94.7	2	5.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	38	100.0
3. School philosophy	2	5.4	-	-	32	86.5	1	2.6	2	5.4	37	100.0

MHQ = Ministry Headquarters; REO = Regional Education Office; HOS = Heads of Schools: AD = Academic Department

Overall Perceived Degree of Actual Control

Table 6.19 presents in rank order the perceived degree of actual control before and after the reform, exercised by the five organizational levels over each decision item. The sequence of individuals or organizational levels listed from left to right indicates an increasing degree of control over the decision item. For example, regarding the first item (funds to a school), teachers (T) were perceived to have the least control, while ministry headquarters (MHQ) was perceived to have the most control. These rankings are based on data presented in the preceding section. Whenever scores for two groups are the same a stroke or slash (/) is used to indicate the tie in rank order. Table 6.20 shows how many times each level was listed in a particular position in the rank order.

Ministry Headquarters. The organizational level with the most control was the ministry headquarters (Table 6.20). It was perceived to have the highest degree of control over thirty-seven of the fifty-one decision items before the adoption of the decentralization reform in 1989/90, and thirty-two of the fifty-one decision items in 1994, at least four years after the adoption of the reform. As indicated in Table 6.19, ministry headquarters was seen to have major control over most decision items in almost all decision categories except community relations.

As a result of the recent decentralization reform, ministry headquarters delegated major control over five

Table 6.19

Rank Order of Perceived Degree of Actual Control Before and After the Reform by Organizational Levels

Decision Item	Item No		Least Control 1	2	3	4	Most Control 5
Finance and Budgeting							
Funds to a school	1	Before	T	AD	REO	HOS	MHQ
		After	T	AD	REO	HOS	MHQ
Staff salaries	2	Before	AD	T	HOS	REO	MHQ
		After	AD	T	HOS	REO	MHQ
Payment for equipment	3	Before	T	AD	HOS	REO	MHQ
		After	T	AD	HOS	MHQ	REO
Payment for services	4	Before	T	AD	HOS	REO	MHQ
		After	T	AD	MHQ	HOS	REO
School expenditures	5	Before	T	REO	AD	HOS	MHQ
		After	T	MHQ	REO	AD	HOS
Funds for new program	6	Before	T /	AD	HOS	REO	MHQ
		After	T	AD	HOS	REO	MHQ
Fund raising	7	Before	REO	T	AD	MHQ	HOS
		After	REO	T	MHQ	AD	HOS
School fees	8	Before	T /	AD	REO	HOS	MHQ
		After	T /	AD	REO	HOS	MHQ
Boarding fees	9	Before	AD	REO	T	HOS	MHQ
		After	AD	T	REO	HOS	MHQ
Capital Expenditures							
Build a new school	1	Before	T /	AD	HOS	REO	MHQ
		After	T /	AD	HOS	REO	MHQ
Location of a new school	2	Before	T /	AD	HOS	REO	MHQ
		After	T	AD	HOS	REO	MHQ
Type of school to build	3	Before	T	AD	HOS	REO	MHQ
		After	T	AD	HOS	REO	MHQ
Addition to a school	4	Before	T /	AD	HOS	REO	MHQ
		After	T	AD	HOS	REO	MHQ
Building changes	5	Before	T	AD	REO	HOS	MHQ
		After	T	AD	REO	HOS	MHQ

Table 6.19 (continues)

Table 6.19 (continued)

Decision Item	Item No		Least Control 1	2	3	4	Most Control 5
Equipment, Supplies and Services							
Building maintenance	1	Before	T	AD	REO	HOS	MHQ
		After	T	AD	REO	HOS	MHQ
Provision of furniture	2	Before	AD	T	HOS	REO	MHQ
		After	T	AD	HOS	REO	MHQ
Textbooks	3	Before	REO	HOS	T	AD	MHQ
		After	REO	T	AD	HOS	MHQ
Library books	4	Before	REO	T	AD	HOS	MHQ
		After	REO	T	AD	HOS	MHQ
School supplies	5	Before	T	AD	REO	HOS	MHQ
		After	T	AD	REO	MHQ	HOS
School equipment	6	Before	T	AD	REO	HOS	MHQ
		After	T	AD	REO	HOS	MHQ
Provision of transport	7	Before	T	AD	HOS	REO	MHQ
		After	T	AD	HOS	MHQ	REO
Curriculum and Instruction							
Instructional methods	1	Before	REO	HOS	AD	T	MHQ
		After	REO	HOS	AD	T	MHQ
Extra-Curricular activities	2	Before	REO	MHQ	AD	T	HOS
		After	REO	MHQ	AD	T	HOS
Co-ordination of instruction	3	Before	REO	T	AD	MHQ	HOS
		After	REO	T	MHQ	AD	HOS
Curriculum content	4	Before	REO	HOS	AD	T	MHQ
		After	REO	HOS	AD	T	MHQ
Program evaluation	5	Before	REO	AD	T	HOS	MHQ
		After	REO	AD	T	HOS	MHQ
Personnel Management							
Appointment of heads of schools	1	Before	T	AD	HOS	REO	MHQ
		After	T	AD	HOS	REO	MHQ
Appointment of heads of departments	2	Before	REO	AD	T	MHQ	HOS
		After	REO	AD	T	HOS	MHQ
Appointment of teachers	3	Before	T	AD	HOS	REO	MHQ
		After	T	AD	HOS	REO	MHQ

Table 6.19 (continues)

Table 6.19 (continued)

Decision Item	Item No		Least Control 1	2	3	4	Most Control 5
Teaching assignments	4	Before	REO	MHQ	T	AD	HOS
		After	REO	MHQ	T	AD	HOS
Staff discipline	5	Before	T	AD	REO	HOS	MHQ
		After	T	AD	REO	HOS	MHQ
In-service training	6	Before	T	AD	REO	HOS	MHQ
		After	T	AD	HOS	REO	MHQ
Teacher evaluation	7	Before	T	REO	AD	HOS	MHQ
		After	T	AD	/ REO	HOS	MHQ
Student Management							
Student conduct	1	Before	REO	AD	T	MHQ	HOS
		After	REO	AD	T	MHQ	HOS
Student assessment	2	Before	REO	MHQ	AD	HOS	T
		After	REO	MHQ	AD	T	HOS
Reporting procedure	3	Before	REO	MHQ	T	AD	HOS
		After	REO	MHQ	AD	T	HOS
Discipline procedure	4	Before	REO	AD	T	HOS	MHQ
		After	REO	AD	T	MHQ	HOS
Student expulsion	5	Before	REO	AD	T	HOS	MHQ
		After	AD	REO	T	HOS	MHQ
J.C.E examinations	6	Before	REO	AD	T	HOS	MHQ
		After	REO	AD	T	HOS	MHQ
M.C.E examinations	7	Before	REO	AD	T	HOS	MHQ
		After	REO	AD	T	HOS	MHQ
Student promotion	8	Before	REO	AD	T	MHQ	HOS
		After	REO	AD	/ MHQ	T	HOS
Organizational Structure							
Number of staff	1	Before	T	REO	AD	HOS	MHQ
		After	T	AD	REO	HOS	MHQ
Timetabling	2	Before	REO	MHQ	T	AD	HOS
		After	REO	MHQ	T	AD	HOS
Instructional time	3	Before	T	REO	AD	HOS	MHQ
		After	T	REO	AD	HOS	MHQ
Class size	4	Before	T	REO	AD	HOS	MHQ
		After	T	AD	REO	HOS	MHQ

Table 6.19 (continues)

Table 6.19 (continued)

Decision Item	Item No		Least Control 1	2	3	4	Most Control 5
Community Relations							
Parental involvement	1	Before	REO	MHQ	AD	T	HOS
		After	MHQ	REO	AD	T	HOS
Relating to other institutions	2	Before	REO	MHQ	T	AD	HOS
		After	REO	MHQ	T	AD	HOS
Use of school buildings	3	Before	REO	T	AD	MHQ	HOS
		After	REO	T	AD	MHQ	HOS
Policy Making and Decision Making							
School policies	1	Before	T	REO	AD	HOS	MHQ
		After	T	AD	REO	HOS	MHQ
National policies	2	Before	T	AD	HOS	REO	MHQ
		After	T	AD	HOS	REO	MHQ
School philosophy	3	Before	REO	AD	T	MHQ	HOS
		After	REO	AD	MHQ	T	HOS

Table 6.20

Summary of Distribution of the Perceived Degree of Actual Control over Decisions by Different Levels

Organizational Level		Least Control 1	2	3	4	Most Control 5
Ministry Headquarters (MHQ)	Before	–	7	–	7	37
	After	1	7	5	6	32
Heads of Schools (HOS)	Before	–	3	13	22	13
	After	–	2	13	20	16
Academic Departments (AD)	Before	3	28	15	5	–
	After	3	32	10	6	–
Regional Education Office (REO)	Before	23	7	8	13	–
	After	21	3	13	11	3
Teachers (T)	Before	25	6	15	4	1
	After	26	9	9	7	–

decision items. These items pertained to the following decision categories: (1) finance and budgeting; and (2) equipment, supplies and services; and (3) student management.

Heads of Schools. As indicated in Table 6.20, heads of schools were perceived to have the highest degree of control over thirteen of the fifty-one decision items (before 1989/90) and sixteen (at the time of the study). As indicated in Table 6.19, these items pertained to the following decision categories: (1) curriculum and instruction; (2) student management; (3) community relations; (4) finance and budgeting; (5) equipment, supplies and services; (6) personnel management; (7) organizational structure; and (8) policy making and decision making. This suggests that there was some decentralization, but not a tremendous amount. Heads of schools were perceived to have the highest control over all three items in the community relations category and over five items in the student management category. In the other six decision categories, heads of schools were perceived to have the highest degree of actual control over one or two items in each category.

Heads of schools were also perceived to have the second-highest degree of control over 22 decisions initially and 20 decisions in 1994. Most of the items pertained to five decision categories: (1) finance and budgeting; (2) equipment, supplies and services; (3) organizational structure; (4) personnel management; and (5) student management. Heads of schools were also perceived to have the third-highest degree of control over 13 decision areas in five decision categories both before and after the reform. It is noteworthy that heads of schools did not rank in the lowest category (rank 5) for any of the decision items and were in the second-lowest rank for only three of the 51 decisions before 1989 and two in 1994.

Academic Departments. The organizational level with the third-highest degree of control was the academic departments. They were perceived to have no major control over any of the decision items during both periods but had the second-highest degree of control over four decisions initially and eight decisions in 1994. Academic departments were also perceived to have the third-highest degree of control over fifteen decision areas in eight decision categories before the reform and ten decision areas in only four decision categories in 1994. It is noteworthy that academic departments ranked in the lowest category (rank 5) for only three of the 51 decision items during both periods and were in the second-lowest rank for 29 and 32 of the 51 decisions before and after the reform respectively.

The Regional Education Office. The REO was perceived to have no major control over any of the fifty-one decision items before 1989/90. However, at the time of the study in 1994, the office was perceived to have the highest degree of control over three decision items relating to payment for equipment and services and provision of transport. The REO was perceived to have the second-highest degree of control over thirteen of the fifty-one decision items initially, before 1989/90 and eleven items in 1994. The office was perceived to have the second-highest control over four of the five items in the capital expenditures category during both periods.

Teachers. Of the five levels, teachers had the least degree of control (Table 6.20). They were perceived to have the highest degree of actual control over only one item before 1989/90, student assessment and none in 1994. However, teachers were seen to be the level with the least control over twenty-five items before 1989/90 and twenty-six items in 1994. Their control was perceived to be moderately high over decision items relating to curriculum and instruction and student management.

Discussion

The above findings are not surprising. They appear to confirm that control over many educational decisions still resides at ministry headquarters. Overall, MHQ was perceived to have relatively high degree of actual control over all but one decision category, namely, community relations.

At the time of the study in 1994, the perceived high degree of control by MHQ exceeded that of the other groups in seven of the nine decision categories, including: (1)

finance and budgeting; (2) capital expenditure; (3) equipment, supplies and services; (4) curriculum and instruction; (5) personnel management; (6) organizational structure; and (7) policy making. Heads of schools, were perceived to have greater control than headquarters over the remaining two categories: student management and community relations. However, heads were perceived to have a high degree of control over a number of the same decision categories as headquarters. At the time of the study in 1994, only one decision category, capital expenditure, was not controlled to any extent by the heads.

Regarding teachers, the results might be unexpected, since teachers are most directly involved in the delivery of services to the student clientele. Yet, either headquarters or heads were perceived to have a higher degree of control over curriculum and instruction and student management than teachers.

Overall, the results indicated that major control over most decision categories was perceived to be held by the ministry headquarters and heads of schools, while the REOs, academic departments and teachers were perceived to have the least control over most decision categories.

Actual Locus of Control in Relation to Preferred Locus of Control

This section addresses the following research question: What is the locus of preferred control over educational decisions by each of the five organizational levels and how is this related to the locus of actual control at the time of the study?

Table 6.21 presents data about respondents' perceptions as to which organizational levels exercised major control before 1989/90, at the time of the study in 1994 and respondents' preferred locus of control over each decision item.

Table 6.22 displays (1) frequency counts of the total number of items for which participants identified each level as having the highest level of control and (2) frequency counts of the total number of items participants preferred each level to have the highest level of control.

While Table 6.20 indicated that heads of schools had the highest actual control over sixteen of the fifty-one decision items, respondents preferred that they should have major control over thirty-three of the fifty-one items. As indicated in Table 6.21, these items pertained to all nine decision categories. Heads were preferred to have major control over half of the items in most categories except capital expenditures and curriculum and instruction.

In their responses to the open-ended question, most respondents indicated that heads of schools should also exercise major control over the following decisions: selection of students to secondary school; the number of support staff required in a school; promotion of teachers;

Table 6.21

Actual and Preferred Locus of Control Over
Each Decision Area

Decision Area	Item	Organizational Levels		
		Before 1989/90	1994	Should
Finance and Budgeting				
Funds to a school	1	MHQ	MHQ	MHQ
Staff salaries	2	MHQ	MHQ	REO
Payment for equipment	3	MHQ	REO	HOS
Payment for services	4	MHQ	REO	HOS
School expenditures	5	MHQ	HOS	HOS
Funds for new program	6	MHQ	MHQ	MHQ
Fund raising	7	HOS	HOS	HOS
School fees	8	MHQ	MHQ	HOS
Boarding fees	9	MHQ	MHQ	HOS
Capital Expenditures				
Build a new school	1	MHQ	MHQ	MHQ
Location of a new School	2	MHQ	MHQ	REO
Type of school to build	3	MHQ	MHQ	REO
Addition to a school	4	MHQ	MHQ	HOS
Building changes	5	MHQ	MHQ	HOS
Equipment, Supplies and Services				
Building maintenance	1	MHQ	MHQ	HOS
Provision of furniture	2	MHQ	MHQ	REO
Textbooks	3	MHQ	MHQ	HOS
Library books	4	MHQ	MHQ	HOS
School supplies	5	MHQ	HOS	HOS
School equipment	6	MHQ	MHQ	HOS
Provision of transport	7	MHQ	REO	HOS
Curriculum and Instruction				
Instructional methods	1	MHQ	MHQ	T
Extra-curricular activities	2	HOS	HOS	HOS
Co-ordination of instruction	3	HOS	HOS	HOS
Curriculum content	4	MHQ	MHQ	MHQ
Program evaluation	5	MHQ	MHQ	MHQ
Personnel Management				
Appointment of heads of schools	1	MHQ	MHQ	MHQ
Appointment of heads of departments	2	HOS	MHQ	HOS
Appointment of teachers	3	MHQ	MHQ	REO
Teaching assignments	4	HOS	HOS	HOS

Table 6.21 (continues)

Table 6.21 (continued)

Decision Area	Item	Organizational Levels		
		Before 1989/90	1994	Should
Staff discipline	5	MHQ	MHQ	HOS
In-service training	6	MHQ	MHQ	REO
Teacher evaluation	7	MHQ	MHQ	HOS
Student Management				
Student conduct	1	HOS	HOS	HOS
Student assessment procedures	2	HOS	HOS	HOS
Reporting procedure	3	HOS	HOS	HOS
Discipline procedure	4	MHQ	HOS	HOS
Student expulsion	5	MHQ	MHQ	MHQ
J.C.E examinations	6	MHQ	MHQ	MHQ
M.C.E examinations	7	MHQ	MHQ	MHQ
Student promotion	8	HOS	HOS	HOS
Organizational Structure				
Number of staff	1	MHQ	MHQ	HOS
Timetabling	2	HOS	HOS	HOS
Instructional time	3	MHQ	MHQ	MHQ
Class size	4	MHQ	MHQ	HOS
Community Relations				
Parental involvement	1	HOS	HOS	HOS
Relating to other institutions	2	HOS	HOS	HOS
Use of school buildings	3	HOS	HOS	HOS
Policy Making and Decision Making				
School policies	1	MHQ	MHQ	HOS
National policies	2	MHQ	MHQ	MHQ
School philosophy	3	HOS	HOS	HOS

Table 6.22

Summary of Actual and Preferred Locus of Control

	Actual		Preferred
Level	Before 1989/90	1994	
Ministry Headquarters	37	32	11
Heads of Schools	14	16	33
Regional Education Office	–	3	6
Academic Departments	–	–	–
Teachers	–	–	1

exclusion of pupils from school; transfer of pupils from one secondary school to another; and mode of dress in a school. On the other hand, respondents perceived that ministry headquarters had major control over thirty-two items, whereas they preferred it to have control over only eleven items.

Respondents also preferred that REOs should exercise major control over six decision items namely, staff salaries, location of a new school, type of school to build, provision of furniture, appointment of teachers and in-service training, whereas in 1994 REOs were perceived to have major control over only three items (payment for services, payment for equipment and provision of transport). Academic departments were perceived not to exercise major control over any decision item in 1994; this was in keeping with the preferences of the respondents. Respondents preferred that teachers should exercise major control over one item, instructional methods; in 1994 they were perceived not to have major control over any of the 51 decision areas. This finding suggests that educational administrators in 1994 acknowledged secondary school teachers' professional autonomy in the classroom, but this had not been realised at the time of the study.

Changes in the General Degree of Control

The fifth research questions of the study was associated with ascertaining the extent to which changes were perceived to have occurred in the degree of control over educational decisions during the period before the recent educational decentralization reform of 1989/90 and at the time of the study in 1994, five years after the reform.

A summary of responses associated with the respondents' perceptions of actual and preferred locus of control exerted by the five levels is presented in Table 6.21.

The means for the responses to all items by all respondents are presented in Appendix G. Any difference between the means for the responses indicating the degree of control by a particular organizational level before 1989/90 and in 1994 would indicate a perceived change in the degree of control. No change or minor changes were perceived for 17 of the 51 decision items. A summary of the items for which substantial change was indicated is presented in Table 6.23.

Changes for Ministry Headquarters. The degree of control by ministry headquarters was perceived to have decreased in 1994 with respect to twelve decision items (Table 6.23). The areas related to funds to a school, staff salaries, payment for equipment and services, distribution of school expenditure, textbooks to be used in a subject, provision of library books, provision of school supplies and equipment, provision of transport, J.C.E examinations and use of school buildings by the community. For nine of the twelve items, the amount of change was little. However, greater change was noted for the other three items (payment

Table 6.23

Changes in Mean Degree of Control for All Respondents

ITEM	DECREASE					INCREASE				
	MHQ	REO	HOS	AD	T	MHQ	REO	HOS	AD	T
Finance and Budgeting										
Funds to a school	-						+++	+++	+	+
Staff salaries	-						+++			
Payment for equipment	--						+++	+++		
Payment for services	---						+++	++		
School expenditure	--						+	++	++	+
Funds for new program							+	+	+	+
Fund raising							+	+		
Boarding fees							+			
Capital Expenditure										
School location							+			
Addition to a school							+			
Building changes							++	+		
Equipment, Supplies and Services										
Building Maintenance						+	++	++		
Provision of furniture							++	+	+	
Textbooks	-						+	++	+	+
Library books	-						+	++	+	+
School supplies	-						++	++	++	+
School equipment	-						++	++	++	+
Provision of transport	-						++			+++
Curriculum and Instruction										
Instructional methods									+	
Instructional co-ordination							+			
Program evaluation							+			

+ = increase of control of .5 to .99

++ = increase of control of 1.0 to 1.49

+++ = increase of control of 1.5 or more

- = decrease of control of .5 to .99
-- = decrease of control of 1.0 to 1.49
--- = decrease of control of 1.5 or more

MHQ = Ministry Headquarters
REO = Regional Education Office
HOS = Heads of Schools
AD = Academic Department
T = Teacher(s)

Table 6.23 (continues)

Table 6.23 (continued)

ITEM	DECREASE					INCREASE				
	MHQ	REO	HOS	AD	T	MHQ	REO	HOS	AD	T
Personnel Management										
Appointment of heads of departments			-			++				
Appointment of teachers							+			
Teaching assignment									+	+
Staff discipline							+			
In-service training							+	+	+	
Teacher evaluation							+	+	+	
Student Management										
Student conduct							+			
School discipline							+			
J.C.E. Examinations	-									
Organizational Structure										
Number of staff							+			
Community Relations										
Use of school buildings	-									
Policy Making and Decision Making										
School policies							+	+		
National school policies							+			

+ = increase of control of .5 to .99

++ = increase of control of 1.0 to 1.49

+++ = increase of control of 1.5 or more

- = decrease of control of .5 to .99
-- = decrease of control of 1.0 to 1.49
--- = decrease of control of 1.5 or more

MHQ = Ministry Headquarters
REO = Regional Education Office
HOS = Heads of Schools
AD = Academic Department
T = Teacher(s)

for equipment, payment for services and distribution of school expenditure).

The Ministry was seen to have increased its control over only two items in 1994. These related to maintenance of school buildings and the appointment of heads of departments.

An overview of the mean responses seems to indicate a perception that ministry headquarter's degree of control had decreased over a number of items pertaining to finance and budgeting, and equipment, supplies and services.

Changes for the Regional Education Office. The Regional Education Office was seen to have increased its control over 29 decision items in 1994. As indicated in Table 6.21, these items pertained to the following eight decision categories: (1) finance and budgeting; (2) capital expenditure; (3) equipment, supplies and services; (4) curriculum and instruction; (5) personnel management; (6) student management; (7) organizational structure; and (8) policy making and decision making. Changes in four of the seven items in the finance and budgeting category and five of the seven decision items in the equipment, supplies and services category were perceived to be greater than for the rest of the decision items.

The overall indication was of a perception that the REO's control over educational decisions related to government secondary schools had increased as a result of the recent decentralization reform.

Changes for Heads of Schools. The degree of control by the Heads was perceived to have decreased in 1994 with respect to only one item related to the appointment of heads of departments. On the other hand, heads of schools were perceived to have increased remarkably their degree of control over seventeen of the fifty-one decision items in 1994. Most of these items pertained to the following decision categories: (a) finance and budgeting; (b) equipment, supplies and services; (c) personnel management; (d) capital expenditure; and (e) policy making and decision making.

The overall pattern showed a perception of a general increase in the degree of control by heads of schools over a number of decisions as a result of the 1989/90 decentralization policy.

Changes for Academic Departments. The academic departments were seen to have increased their control in 1994 over twelve decision items. As indicated in Table 6.23, these items pertained to: (1) finance and budgeting; (2) equipment, supplies and services; (3) curriculum and instruction; and (4) personnel management. Changes in one of the three items in the finance and budgeting category and two of the five decision items in the equipment, supplies and services category were perceived to be greater than for the rest of the decision items.

Changes for Teachers. Teachers were perceived to have increased their control over eight decision items. As indicated in Table 6.23, these items pertained to: (1) finance and budgeting; (2) equipment, supplies and services; and (3) personnel management. However, the magnitude of changes for all the eight items was not great.

Discussion

Analysis of the responses revealed that the respondents perceived some changes in the degree of control exerted by various organizational levels over a selection of educational decisions. Increases in degree of control over educational decision items were noted in 32 of the 51 decision items. The increases were mostly associated with the REO, heads of schools and academic departments. Although ministry headquarters was seen to have increased its control over two of the 32 decisions, it was seen to have decreased its degree of control over twelve decisions. A few minor changes in the degree of control were perceived for teachers.

Based on the data displayed in Appendix F, it appears that for many of the items the change in degree of control was not sufficient to vary the main pattern of control for them. However, the changes in the degree of control over certain decision items leads one to assume that there is a shift toward decentralization of educational decision making and a gradual transfer of control to the REO and to the school. One only hopes that the shift will continue considering that all of what is intended is not yet achieved.

Differences Between Major Respondent Groups' Perceptions

One of the research questions in the study was associated with ascertaining the extent to which differences exist between headquarters and school administrators with respect to perceived changes in control over educational decisions.

Analysis of the responses from two major groups of respondents (ministry and school administrators) with respect to their perceptions of changes in control revealed no differences or minor differences in perceived changes for 37 of the 51 decision items. Table 6.24 identifies the items on which there were substantial differences between the two main groups of respondents on the perceived changes in control. The final column shows the difference between the means of the two groups. Only items where the mean difference was .5 and greater between the two groups were reported. Such differences were noted in relation to 15 out of the 51 items as indicated in Table 6.24. Eight of the fifteen items are in the categories of: finance and budgeting and equipment, supplies and services. Three fall in the personnel management category and the remaining two items are in the curriculum and instruction, student management, school community and policy making categories.

Table 6.24
Differences on the Perceived Changes of Control
by Ministry and School Personnel

		MHQ Personnel		School Personnel		
		N=15		N=21		
Type of Decision	Level	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Difference
Finance & Budgeting						
Allocation of funds	HOS	2.13	1.36	1.41	1.06	0.78
Payment for school equipment	HOS	1.14	1.46	1.79	1.51	0.65
Payment for services	REO	1.50	1.99	2.10	1.65	0.60
School expenditures	MHQ	-2.07	2.02	-0.89	1.24	-1.18
	HOS	1.80	1.78	1.11	1.76	0.69
Equipment, Supplies Services						
School Maintenance	MHQ	-1.31	1.32	-0.47	0.91	-0.84
Textbooks	MHQ	-0.14	0.36	-1.05	1.57	-0.91
	REO	0.21	1.12	0.85	1.18	0.68
	HOS	0.71	1.33	1.25	1.56	0.56
Provision of school supplies	MHQ	-1.57	1.65	-0.56	1.76	-1.01
Provision of transport	REO	1.42	1.83	2.22	1.48	1.18
	HOS	1.71	1.77	2.28	1.32	0.57
Curriculum & Instruction						
Program Evaluation	REO	1.00	1.29	0.41	0.87	0.59
Personnel Management						
Appointment of heads of department	MHQ	1.75	2.01	1.22	1.70	0.53
	HOD	-0.92	1.88	-0.30	2.02	-0.62
In-service training	AD	1.00	1.13	0.30	0.66	0.70
Teacher evaluation	REO	1.33	1.68	0.32	0.67	1.01
	HOS	1.33	1.36	0.20	0.62	1.13
	AD	1.33	1.46	0.53	0.77	0.80
Student Management						
J.C.E. examinations	MHQ	-0.46	1.20	-1.35	1.60	-0.87
Community Relations						
Use of buildings	MHQ	-0.23	1.17	-0.94	1.39	-0.71
Policy Making						
National school policies	REO	1.23	1.30	0.53	1.02	0.70

Data on Table 6.24 indicate that ministry administrators perceived heads of schools to have gained more control over the allocation of funds to a school, distribution of expenditures within a school and teacher evaluation than the heads themselves thought. Respondents from headquarters also felt that REOs had gained more control over the evaluation of an instructional program than heads felt. On the other hand, heads felt that they had gained more control only over payment for school equipment and provision of transport than their counterparts thought. Interestingly, while ministry administrators felt that MHQ had given away more control over the distribution of expenditures within a school, maintenance of school buildings and provision of supplies, heads perceived them as giving away more control only over textbooks used in subject areas, the junior certificate of education examinations and the use of school buildings. It is worth noting that both groups felt that MHQ had gained higher degree of control over the appointment of heads of departments and that heads lost a substantial amount of control over the decision. However, ministry administrators felt that MHQ had gained more control while the heads lost more control over the appointment of heads of departments.

Heads perceived the REOs to have gained more control over the payment for school equipment, textbooks, provision of transport than the heads themselves while their counterparts felt that the REOs had gained more control over national school policies and teacher evaluation. Ministry administrators also felt that academic departments had gained more control over in-service training and teacher evaluation than did heads.

Discussion

Substantial differences between the two groups were noted in 15 of the 51 decision items. In all the 15 items both groups generally agreed that the changes were in the same direction. However, where one group perceived the change to be greater or smaller, the other saw it to be the opposite. For example, both ministry and school administrators felt that the heads control over the allocation of funds had increased, ministry administrators felt that the increase was much more than the heads themselves perceived it. According to interviewees from headquarters, ministry administrators felt that heads had gained more control over the allocation of funds to a school because with the new system whereby schools are cost centres, heads had more bargaining power over their budget allocation than they had before the reform.

Another good example relates to the perceptions of the two groups on maintenance. Again both groups perceived a decrease in control over the item on the part of MHQ, however, ministry administrators felt that the decrease was much more than their counterparts perceived it. One possible explanation for such a difference could be that the respondents from headquarters based their responses on the proposed changes while heads based theirs on reality or what had actually happened at the time of the study. This explanation may also account for the differences in perceptions between the two groups on items such as provision of school supplies, in-service training for teachers and teacher evaluation procedures. Major changes were proposed in these areas but at the time of the study the changes had not yet been effected.

Summary and Conclusions

Data about respondents' perceptions as to which level exercised control over fifty-one educational decisions, before the recent decentralization reform of 1989/90 and at the time of the study in 1994, indicate that major control for the majority of items was held by the Ministry Headquarters during both periods. Heads of schools were seen to have the highest degree of actual control over sixteen of the fifty-one decisions. However, respondents preferred heads to have major control over thirty-three of the fifty-one and ministry headquarters to have the highest control over only eleven items.

REOs were perceived to have major control over only three. However, respondents preferred that REOs should exercise major control over six decision. Although both academic departments and teachers were perceived to have no major control over any of the fifty-one items, respondents preferred that teachers should exercise major control over instructional methods.

In chapter four it was noted that based on their findings the Department of Personnel Management and Training review team recommended that the Ministry ought to allocate budgets and most operational functions to regional, district and institutional levels. The functions which were to be delegated to the REO relate to the following decision categories: (1) finance and budgeting (payment for goods and services, payment of salaries, allowances and advances, preparation of estimates and budgets); (2) student management (student discipline); (3) personnel management (staff transfers, leave and posting, staff discipline, recommendation for promotion, staff welfare, in-service for teachers); (4) equipment, supplies and services (building maintenance and upkeep); (5) curriculum and instruction (inspection and supervision).

The above summary of the findings suggests that the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) has generally accepted the DPMT recommendations for decentralization in that it has already transferred some responsibilities to the regional offices and institutions. However, at the time of the study in 1994, delegation of responsibility to regional and government secondary schools was mostly evident in the decision categories of finance and budgeting; and equipment, supplies and services (Tables 6.01 & 6.05). Heads of schools have been given authority over their school budget exclusive of salaries (that is supplies, equipment and services costs). Very slight changes had been noted in decision areas pertaining to personnel and curriculum.

It appears that at the time of the study, decentralization efforts in Malawi had concentrated on devolving authority over operational budgets and included as a secondary concern greater authority in personnel and planning. Respondents generally indicated that control over most educational decisions especially those related to curriculum, administration and personnel matters still resided with ministry headquarters. The World Bank (1989) argued that effective decentralization requires delegation of operational responsibility for finance, administration, student and staff matters to the regional offices and schools.

The summary also reveals substantial differences between the perceptions of actual and preferred locus of major control for heads of schools and ministry headquarters. Respondents advocated the idea of placing more authority in the hands of heads of schools and less in the ministry headquarters. This calls for a marked shift of decision making responsibility from headquarters to schools. At the time of the study the shift was in the process of being effected. Commenting on these findings one administrators stated that for the educational decentralization policy to be effective, decision-making should be responsive to the needs of students. The administrator further stated that this could only be achieved if schools were provided with an appropriate and effective role in the decision making process. In this context, Brown

(1990) noted that the intention appears to be granting schools the authority to be responsive to student needs as perceived by school staff. Commenting from the accounting perspective, another respondent indicated that devolution of operational responsibility for finance to schools ensures the effectiveness of the expenditure of public finances. According to Brown (1990), this comment emphasizes efficiency.

CHAPTER 7

PERCEIVED BENEFITS ASSOCIATED WITH THE DECENTRALIZATION EFFORTS

It has been argued that decentralization is probably appropriate in any situation because a variety of benefits could be derived from it depending on a country's situation (Caldwell, Smilanich and Spinks 1988; Parry, 1990). Hence, several countries have adopted more educational decentralization because of the benefits that can be derived from the system. This chapter focuses on perceived benefits associated with the educational decentralization efforts in Malawi.

Twenty potential benefits of decentralization were identified through a review of the literature and discussion with educational administrators and principals of the Edmonton Public School District during my field experience placement. To assess the extent to which these benefits had been attained, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they perceived each issue to be a benefit in the new system. The questionnaire included an open-ended question which asked respondents to state any other benefits they perceived in the system. Furthermore, a number of respondents from each level, were selected for interviews. The interviews offered respondents opportunities to express their views more vividly on the perceived benefits.

An important focus for this study was to assess the nature and extent of the perceived benefits in Malawi's efforts to decentralize educational decision making. Knowing the nature and extent of the perceived benefits attained in a relatively new system enables policy makers to determine the extent to which the objectives of the system are being achieved. Such an awareness, it is hoped, would help in the appraisal of the system by policy makers as well as other stakeholders. It would also direct subsequent efforts at maintaining the quality already attained and improving upon it. On the other hand, non-attainment or low attainment of the potential benefits would be an indication that objectives of the system are not being achieved. This situation would call for an appraisal of the procedures for getting things done in the system.

The sixth research question of the study is addressed in this chapter:

6. What are the perceptions of administrators of the extent of the benefits of the recent educational decentralization efforts and what differences are there between headquarters and school administrators with respect to these perceptions?

In order to convey a broad perspective on the potential benefits, the chapter begins with a presentation of the perceptions of administrators at two main levels (headquarters and school) with regard to the extent to which these potential benefits might contribute to the smooth operation of the decentralized system. This is because administrators at the different levels may perceive the benefits somewhat differently. The chapter then moves to a discussion of the perceptions of all the educational administrators. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the relationship between the perceptions of the various administrators and the general conclusions that can be drawn from the analysis.

Extent of Benefits as Perceived by Ministry Headquarters Personnel

A summary of responses indicating headquarters administrators' perceptions of benefits derived from the recent efforts of educational decentralization is presented in Table 7.01. This table, and the others presented in this chapter display mean scores and standard deviations (SD) for each of the potential benefits. The table, and subsequent tables in this chapter display the mean scores on each benefit in rank order from the combined responses of the all respondents. The options ranged from "not a benefit" (1) to "major benefit" (5). The means are regarded as a measure of the extent to which a particular benefit has been realized. As such, throughout the chapter, items with means of 4.0 or greater are regarded as "major benefits", those with means of between 3.0 and 4.0 are regarded as "moderate benefits", and those with means below 3.0 are regarded as "slight benefits." The items on Table 7.01 are also ranked according to the size of the means. The table also displays the standard deviations (SD) for each of the identified benefits. Standard deviations are taken to be a measure of agreement. If the standard deviation is relatively low, it indicates that the group whose data were analyzed is in close agreement, whereas if the standard deviation is relatively high, the level of agreement would be much lower.

According to the results displayed in Table 7.01, headquarters administrators perceived sixteen of the twenty-two items as major benefits associated with decentralization efforts. However, five out of the sixteen major benefits had mean scores of 4.5 and above. These were in the following rank order: "frees the top officials from routine administrative matters" (mean of 4.87), "delegates decision making to those who have responsibility for implementing the decision" (mean of 4.80), "gives schools more authority to control educational resources" (mean of 4.60), "ensures better allocation of resources to schools" (mean of 4.60), "promotes better accountability for decisions made" (mean of 4.60) and "provides more opportunity for lower level administrators to participate in administrative decision making" (mean of 4.50). The rest of the items met the criterion of moderate benefits.

It is worth noting that with the exception of item 17 (recognizes the expertise and competence of those who work in secondary schools), the rest of the sixteen items that met the criterion of major benefit had standard deviations which were relatively low (ranging from .35 to .96). Again,

Table 7.01

Extent of Benefits of Decentralization as Perceived by MHQ Personnel

Benefits	Mean	S.D.	N	Rank
21. Frees the top officials from routine administrative matters	4.87	0.35	15	1
22. Delegates decision making to those who have responsibility for implementing the decision	4.80	0.41	15	2
20. Gives schools more authority to control educational resources	4.60	0.74	15	4
1. Ensures better allocation of resources to schools	4.60	0.74	15	4
3. Promotes better accountability for decisions made	4.60	0.63	15	4
2. Provides more opportunity for lower level administrators to participate in administrative decision making	4.50	0.76	14	6
10. Provides clearer division of roles between headquarters and schools	4.47	0.64	15	7
4. Motivates new leaders at all levels of education	4.40	0.83	15	8
16. Strengthens the quality of planning process	4.33	0.90	15	9.5
12. Promotes more efficient use of school resources	4.33	0.72	15	9.5
5. Improves responsiveness to local needs	4.29	0.77	15	11

Table 7.01 (continued)

Table 7.01 continued

Benefits	Mean	S.D.	N	Rank
18. Improves communication in the system	4.27	0.80	15	13
11. Provides flexibility in the allocation of resources within the school	4.27	0.88	15	13
15. Enhances staff morale and motivation	4.27	0.70	15	13
14. Fosters development of managerial skills in lower level personnel	4.20	0.78	15	15
6. Increases responsiveness to staff personnel needs	4.07	0.96	15	16.5
17. Recognizes the expertise and competence of those who work in secondary schools	4.07	1.10	15	16.5
7. Provides greater attention to staff development	3.86	0.86	15	18
9. Stimulates instructional improvement	3.67	1.35	15	19
19. Brings financial and instructional resources in line with instructional goals	3.40	1.45	15	20
13. Improves student academic achievement	3.36	0.93	14	21
8. Increases responsiveness by headquarters staff	3.20	1.27	15	22

Scale used was: 1 = not a benefit to 5 = major benefit

this indicates that there was a high level of agreement among headquarters administrators with respect to the extent of the benefits.

The rest of the items met the criterion for identification as moderate benefits. The range of the standard deviations (between .86 and 1.45) indicates that there was close agreement among headquarters administrators on the extent of benefits for some items in this category, and much less agreement on others. For example, they agreed on items such as provides greater attention to staff development (SD of .86) and improves student academic achievement (SD of .93). On the other hand, there was much less agreement on items such as stimulates instructional improvement (SD of 1.35 and brings financial and instructional resources in line with instructional goals (SD of 1.45).

Discussion

The responses of headquarters personnel indicate that all items were perceived as benefits in the recently decentralized system. According to these respondents, some of the main objectives which the decentralized system was designed to achieve, such as delegates decision making to those who have responsibility for implementing the decision, gives schools more authority to control educational resources, strengthens the quality of planning and improves responsiveness to local needs were major benefits. These objectives, according to educational administrators who make national policies for the system, were being met.

In their responses to the open-ended question, respondents from headquarters noted a number of other areas which they perceived as benefits. Two main categories of benefits were identified:

The first category of benefits noted by the respondents was related to decentralized accounting. Some respondents commented that with dispersed accounting to the regions, there had been a remarkable increase in worker satisfaction and productivity in the accounts department at headquarters. This was attributed to the fact that decentralization of accounting services had helped ease the pressures accounting personnel were experiencing under the centralized accounting system. Other comments related to this benefit were: (1) prompt payment of salaries, allowances and leave grants for field staff. This is because under the decentralized system the REO has the mandate to control its own budget and effect payments for such items for all staff in the educational institutions in the region. In other words, with centralized accounting, salaries for the whole country were prepared and payed by headquarters. However, with decentralized accounting, the REO was responsible for salaries of staff in the region; and (2) improved government expenditure.

The second category of benefits related to personnel issues. Among the observations made were: (1) ensures correct and up-to-date record keeping; (2) increased prospects for promotion as a result of the creation of higher posts; and (3) provides clear division of roles between and amongst headquarters staff.

Extent of Benefits as Perceived by School Personnel

The analysis of heads of schools' perceptions of the extent of benefits has been summarised and presented in Table 7.02. The means for all the items indicate that school administrators perceived all issues as benefits to some extent. According to the criterion chosen for the study, these administrators perceived ten of the twenty-two issues as major benefits derived from the recently decentralized system.

Compared to ministry headquarters administrators, school administrators' perceptions were different in a number of respects. For example, while headquarters administrators considered the item, "frees the top officials from routine administrative matters," highest in rank (1st position with a mean of 4.52), school administrators perceived the same item lower (8th position with a mean of 4.14). On the other hand, while headquarters administrators' ranking placed the item, "fosters development of managerial skills in lower level personnel" in the 15th position with a mean of 4.20, school administrators' listing placed the same item 2nd highest with a mean of 4.40. It is worthy of note, however, that

Table 7.02

Extent of Benefits of Decentralization as Perceived by School Personnel

Benefits	Mean	S.D.	N	Rank
22. Delegates decision making to those who have responsibility for implementing the decision	4.52	0.81	21	1
14. Fosters development of managerial skills in lower level personnel	4.40	0.60	20	2
20. Gives schools more authority to control educational resources	4.38	0.81	21	4
2. Provides more opportunity for lower level administrators to participate in administrative decision making	4.38	0.81	21	4
10. Provides clearer division of roles between headquarters and schools	4.38	0.67	21	4
5. Improves responsiveness to local needs	4.30	0.73	20	6
18. Improves communication in the system	4.19	0.60	21	7
21. Frees the top officials from routine administrative matters	4.14	1.06	21	9.5
6. Increases responsiveness to staff personnel needs	4.14	1.28	21	9.5
17. Recognizes the expertise and competence of those who work in secondary schools	4.00	1.14	21	11

Table 7.02 (continued)

Table 7.02 continued

Benefits	Mean	S.D.	N	Rank
16. Strengthens the quality of planning process	3.95	1.16	21	12
1. Ensures better allocation of resources to schools	3.90	1.30	21	14.5
3. Promotes better accountability for decisions made	3.90	0.79	20	14.5
4. Motivates new leaders at all levels of education	3.90	0.94	21	14.5
11. Provides flexibility in the allocation of resources within the school	3.90	1.18	21	14.5
15. Enhances staff morale and motivation	3.85	1.01	21	17
12. Promotes more efficient use of school resources	3.71	0.96	21	18
9. Stimulates instructional improvement	3.43	0.98	21	19
7. Provides greater attention to staff development	3.29	1.15	21	20
19. Brings financial and instructional resources in line with instructional goals	3.19	1.29	21	21
13. Improves student academic achievement	3.19	1.29	21	21
8. Increases responsiveness by headquarters staff	3.19	1.33	21	21

Scale used was: 1 = not a benefit to 5 = major benefit

all these items fell in the category that identified them as major benefits.

Headquarters administrators perceived five moderate benefits. School administrators, on the other hand, perceived twelve, seven of which had means higher than 3.5. It is evident from the standard deviations that opinions of school administrators were somewhat divided with respect to the extent to which they perceived half of the items as benefits. Interestly, the positions for items 7, 9, 19, 13 and 8 were more or less in the same order for both groups.

Discussion

Like headquarters administrators, school personnel perceived every item as a benefit to a major or moderate extent. As stipulated in the DPMT report, the recent decentralization reform aimed at ensuring that decisions pertaining to operational matters were delegated to centres closer to the ground of operation. Decentralized operations were believed to be the most important thing to be done in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the Ministry. Heads' perceptions indicated that delegation of decision making to those who have responsibility for implementing the decision and giving schools more authority to control educational resources were ranked highest and third highest among the items identified as major benefits of the new system. This is an indicator that the main objective was being achieved to some extent.

School administrators did not perceive issues pertaining to student learning and resource allocation as major benefits. Commenting on whether decentralization stimulates instructional improvement, one school administrator felt that "it was too early to say." However, a number of school administrators noted a trend towards closer connection between financial and instructional resources and instructional goals.

Commenting on the general theme of school effectiveness another school administrator remarked that "decentralization may be more effective in accomplishing what schools want to do since they are now able to deploy resources which they could not control under centralized management."

Although in their responses to the open-ended question some heads of schools noted that most salient benefits were included, others noted a number of other perceived benefits. The major issues were mostly related to building maintenance and accounting. On the issue of decentralized building maintenance services, one school administrator remarked that

> Under the centralized system most schools had maintenance problems which were constantly reported to headquarters. It takes the Ministry forever to do something about it. Once maintenance units are established at the REO, upkeep of school buildings in government secondary schools will definitely improve.

A number of school administrators felt that decentralized accounting services enabled them to "promptly pay attention to some needs at school level." In an interview, one respondent stated that "under the new system teachers do not have to wait for materials or make do without basic teaching necessities because the school is responsible for the buying of the materials." Heads, like respondents from headquarters, also noted prompt payment of salaries and allowances as a benefit associated with the decentralization efforts.

Heads of schools also noted that decentralization improves self-confidence in school administrators and encourages team spirit. With respect to personnel issues, heads shared the perceptions of headquarters administrators. They also perceived the following benefits in relation to personnel: upgrading of certain positions including those of teachers, ensures that correct and up-to-date staff record keeping and provides clear division of roles between and among headquarters staff.

Differences Between Headquarters and School Administrators' Perceptions

In the preceding sections of this chapter, reference has been made to similarities and differences between headquarters and school administrators' perceptions of the extent to which particular issues have been seen as benefits.

Table 7.03 presents data on differences that existed on the perceived benefits of decentralization by headquarters and school administrators. The final column shows the difference between the means of the two groups. Only items

Table 7.03

Differences on the Perceived Benefits of Decentralization by Position

	Group 1 Ministry Personnel (N=15)		Group 2 School Personnel (N=21)		
Benefits	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Differences in Means*
Ensures better allocation of resources to schools	4.60	0.74	3.90	1.30	.70
Promotes better accountability for decisions made	4.60	0.63	3.90	0.79	.70
Motivates new leaders to all levels of education	4.40	0.28	3.90	0.94	.50
Provides greater attention to staff development	3.86	0.86	3.29	1.15	.57
Promotes more efficient use of school resources	4.33	0.72	3.71	0.96	.62
Frees the top officials from routine administrative matters	4.87	0.35	4.14	1.06	.63

Scale used was: 1 = not a benefit to 5 = major benefit

* Items where the difference in means between the two groups was .5 or greater

where the difference in means between the two groups was .5 or greater were reported. Substantial differences were found in relation to 6 out of the 22 items as indicated in Table 7.03. These results indicate that administrators at headquarters perceived each of the six issues as more of a benefit than did the heads of schools. These results provide a partial response to the second research question addressed in this chapter. The partial answer is that with respect to only four of the eighteen items were there substantial differences in their perceptions of the extent of the benefits. The preceding discussions with respect to headquarters and school administrators' perceptions provided a more comprehensive response to the benefits derived from the recent decentralization reform.

Benefits as Perceived by Educational Administrators at All Levels

Table 7.04 presents a summary of responses indicating educational administrators' perceptions of benefits derived from Malawi's efforts at decentralizing the education system. According to the results displayed in Table 7.04, educational administrators as a group perceived all items as either major or moderate benefits. Respondents saw sixteen of the twenty-two items as major benefits. Two out of the sixteen major benefits had mean scores of above 4.5. These were: "delegates decision making to those who have responsibility for implementing the decision" (mean of 4.62)

Table 7.04

Extent of Benefits of Decentralizationas as Perceived by Three Respondent Groups

Benefits	Mean	S.D.	N	Rank
Delegates decision making to those who have responsibility for implementing the decision	4.62	0.67	39	1
Gives schools more authority to control educational resources	4.51	0.76	39	2
Frees the top officials from routine administrative matters	4.49	0.89	39	3
Provides more opportunity for lower level administrators to participate in administrative decision making	4.47	0.76	38	4
Provides clearer division of roles between headquarters and schools	4.36	0.67	39	5
Fosters development of managerial skills in lower level personnel	4.32	0.70	38	6
Improves responsiveness to local needs	4.29	0.77	38	7
Improves communication in the system	4.23	0.67	39	8
Ensures better allocation of resources to schools	4.21	1.29	39	9.5
Promotes better accountability for decisions made	4.21	0.78	38	9.5
Increases responsiveness to staff personnel needs	4.13	1.06	39	11
Strengthens the quality of planning process	4.10	1.02	39	12

Table 7.04 (continued)

Table 7.04 continued

Benefits	Mean	S.D.	N	Rank
Motivates new leaders at all levels of education	4.08	0.90	39	13
Provides flexibility in the allocation of resources within the school	4.05	1.05	39	14.5
Enhances staff morale and motivation	4.05	0.89	39	14.5
Recognizes the expertise and competence of those who work in secondary schools	4.03	1.09	39	16
Promotes more efficient use of school resources	3.95	0.89	39	17
Provides greater attention to staff development	3.50	1.03	38	18
Stimulates instructional improvement	3.49	1.10	39	19
Brings financial and instructional resources in line with instructional goals	3.28	1.30	39	20
Improves student academic achievement	3.26	1.11	38	21
Increases responsiveness by headquarters staff	3.21	1.26	39	22

Scale used was: 1 = not a benefit to 5 = major benefit

and "gives schools more authority to control educational resources" (mean of 4.51). Items which ranked third and fourth had means very close to 4.5. These items were: "frees the top officials from routine administrative matters" (mean of 4.49) and "provides more opportunity for lower level administrators to participate in administrative decision making" (mean of 4.47). It is worth noting that for eleven of the sixteen items that met the criterion of major benefit, the standard deviations were relatively low (ranging from .67 to .90). This indicates that there was a high level of agreement with respect to the extent of the benefits.

The rest of the items met the criterion for identification as moderate benefits with mean scores ranging from 3.21 to 3.95. However, except for the top item in this category, the standard deviations were generally high, ranging from 1.03 to 1.30. This suggests that opinions were divided with respect to the extent to which these items were perceived as benefits.

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter examined the perceptions of educational administrators at three levels as to the extent of benefits derived from the recently decentralized educational system in Malawi. All the issues investigated were perceived as benefits to some extent.

Based on data analysis, the benefits may be grouped into six main categories: (1) Resource improvement; (2) Improved resource management; (3) Improved leadership; (4) Improved communication; (5) Instructional emphasis; and (6) Responsiveness to local needs. It is noteworthy that all the five items in the category of "improved leadership", four of the five items in the "improved resource management" category; four of the six items in the "resource improvement" category; one of two items in the "improved communication" category; and the single-item "responsiveness to local needs" category were generally perceived as major benefits.

Items pertaining to instructional emphasis, such as "improves student academic achievement", "brings financial and instructional resources in line with instructional goals"; resource improvement, such as "stimulates instructional improvement" and "provides greater attention to staff development"; improved communication, "increases responsiveness by headquarters staff" were perceived as moderate benefits.

It is worthy of note that the items which ranked highest, "delegates decision making to those who have responsibility for implementing the decision" and "gives schools more authority to control educational resources", both pertaining to improved management, are in line with the main objective which the decentralized educational system in Malawi was designed to achieve. The objective was: to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the system in terms of general management. Redistribution of decision making authority has been identified as the primary means through which improvement of efficiency can be stimulated and sustained. This was evident in the new system in that some formal authority to make decisions in the domains of budget, personnel and program was perceived to have been delegated to REOs and schools.

It is also worth noting that educational administrators did not think that matters pertaining to instructional emphasis or student learning were major benefits. These matters, which included "stimulates instructional improvement", "brings financial and instructional resources in line with instructional goals" and "improves student academic achievement" ranked relatively low. This finding supports what scholars such as Hannaway and Carnoy (1990) noted that research on centralization and decentralization is characterized by virtually complete disconnection between structural reform and anything to do with classroom instruction or the learning of students.

Generally, educational administrators' perceptions of the extent of benefits imply that some of the main objectives which the decentralization reform was designed to achieve, such as those pertaining to the improvement of the Ministry's management are being achieved. However, with respect to the specific benefits, one respondent noted that "the extent of the achievement depends on the extent of decentralization." It is worth noting that educational administrators at all levels also shared the notion that maximum attainment of the perceived benefits would be realized when issues such as the supply of adequate financial resources, well trained personnel and full commitment by senior officers to the realities of decentralization are effectively addressed.

CHAPTER 8

PERCEIVED PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE DECENTRALIZATION EFFORTS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

In the previous chapter, educational administrators' perceptions of the extent of benefits associated with the recent educational decentralization efforts in Malawi were examined. However, delegation of decision making power is rarely implemented without incurring problems. Hence, this chapter focuses on some of the perceived problems associated with the decentralization efforts.

One of the objectives for recommending that the education system in Malawi be decentralized was to address the problems that adversely affected education under the centralization policy. Eighteen potential problem issues were identified through review of the literature, comments from educational administrators, as well as from the researcher's own experience in the traditional system.

On the questionnaire survey, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they perceived each issue to be a problem at the time of the study. In addition, a number of respondents from each level were selected for interviews. Interviews offered respondents opportunities to elaborate on their views on the perceived problems.

To assess the nature and extent of the perceived problems in the education system in Malawi was an important focus for this study. This is because the existence of certain problems in a system undergoing reform could impede the attainment of the reform objectives. It is therefore, crucial for policy makers as well as other administrators to be aware of the existence of problems in the system. This awareness may enable them to counteract the potential negative consequences that could come about as a result of the identified problems. Hence, this chapter examines educational administrators' perceptions of problems affecting the current decentralized educational system in Malawi.

The analysis focuses on the seventh and final research question of the study:

7. What are the perceptions of educational administrators of the extent of problems associated with decentralization efforts and what differences are there between headquarters and school administrators with respect to these perceptions?

In order to convey a broad perspective on the potential problem issues, the chapter begins with a presentation of the perceptions of administrators at two levels (headquarters and government secondary schools) with regard to the extent to which these problems might adversely affect the smooth operation of the decentralized system. This is followed by a discussion of the differences between the perceptions of the two groups of administrators. Then, the perceptions of all the educational administrators are examined and discussed. The chapter concludes with a summary and general conclusions drawn from the analysis.

Extent of Problems of Decentralization as Perceived by Headquarters Personnel

Data summarizing the perceptions of ministry headquarters administrators as to the extent of perceived problems associated with Malawi's efforts at decentralizing educational decision making are presented in Table 8.01. The table, and subsequent tables in this chapter, display the mean scores (M) on each problem in rank order based on the combined ratings of all respondents. The options ranged from "not a problem" (1) to "major problem" (5). The means are regarded as a measure of the seriousness of a particular problem. As such, throughout the chapter, items with means of 4.0 or greater are regarded as "major problems", those with means from 3.0 to 3.9 inclusive are regarded as "moderately serious problems", and those with means below 3.0 are regarded as "the least salient of the problems." The table also displays the standard deviations (SD) for each of the identified problems. Standard deviations are taken to be measures of agreement. If the standard deviation is relatively low, it indicates that the individuals in the group whose data were analyzed are in close agreement, whereas if the standard deviation is relatively high, there was less agreement within the group.

The respondents from ministry headquarters (national

Table 8.01

Extent of Problems of Decentralization Efforts as Perceived by MHQ Personnel

Problems	Mean	S.D.	N	Rank
9. The Ministry not being ready to implement fully the new system	4.40	1.06	15	1.5
1. Resource unavailability or insufficiency	4.40	1.40	15	1.5
16. Lack of commitment by senior administrators to the realities of decentralization	4.33	0.98	15	3
18. Reluctance by the Ministry to delegate the planning function to the regional level	3.93	1.39	15	4
17. Inadequate organizational infrastructures for communication between and among the Ministry, Regional Offices and schools	3.87	1.19	15	5
7. Inadequate positive incentives for the people expected to play a leading role	3.80	1.42	15	6
8. Lower level administrators not receiving adequate education on the new system	3.73	1.16	15	7
4. Constraints caused by centrally determined rules and regulations	3.47	1.13	15	8.5
3. Uncertainty regarding the new roles and responsibilities administrators at different educational levels are expected to assume	3.47	1.25	15	8.5

Table 8.01 (continued)

Table 8.01 continued

Problems	Mean	S.D.	N	Rank
11. Increased responsibility and time demands for REOs, headmasters and headmistresses	3.33	1.18	15	10
13. Lack of a system to monitor successes and problems with implementation	3.27	1.53	15	11
10. Devising allocation formulae which are truly equitable	3.20	1.32	15	12
2. Insufficient and unclear implementation procedures	3.13	1.55	15	13
6. Lack of ability and expertise at lower levels of the Ministry to exercise proper control	2.93	1.34	15	14
5. Lack of self-confidence on the part of all parties involved in decision making	2.60	1.35	15	15
12. Lack of extensive preparation and pilot programs	2.47	1.06	15	16
14. Magnitude of the decentralization effort	2.33	0.98	15	17
15. Suddenness of the decentralization effort	2.00	1.07	15	18

Scale used was: 1 = not a problem to 5 = major problem

policy makers) perceived three major problems, the first three of the five major problems identified by the group of all respondents. Headquarters administrators saw the problems of "the Ministry not being ready to implement fully the new system" and "resource unavailability or insufficiency" as sharing the first rank with mean scores of 4.40. In addition, the administrators perceived "lack of commitment by senior administrators to the realities of decentralization" with a mean score of 4.33 as the third major problem.

Of the ten items which headquarters respondents saw as posing moderately serious problems, eight appear to have implications for structure. These were: reluctance by the ministry to delegate the planning function to the regional level; inadequate organizational infra-structure for communication between and among levels; lower level administrators not receiving adequate education on the new system; constraints caused by centrally determined rules and regulations; uncertainty regarding the new roles and responsibilities administrators at different levels are expected to assume; increased responsibility and time demands for REOs, and heads; lack of a system to monitor successes and problems with implementation; and insufficient and unclear implementation procedures. The remaining two items related to resources.

It is worth noting that two of the five issues rated as the least salient problems related more closely to operations either at the REOs and school level (e.g.,"lack of ability and expertise at lower levels to exercise proper control", item ranked 14), or all levels (e.g.,"lack of self-confidence of all parties", item 15). The other three issues related to planning for the implementation of the reform.

Discussion

The analysis of headquarters administrators' responses suggests that they perceived that the major problems of the recently decentralized educational system pertained to the ministry not being ready, resources insufficiency as well as lack of commitment by senior administrators to the realities of decentralization.

It is worth noting that respondents from headquarters consisted of senior administrators whose primary role is policy making and monitoring. Some administrators offered possible explanations as to why policy makers at headquarters ranked the three issues as the top three problems. First, a number of administrators attributed the state of affairs to the fact that the decentralization of the Ministry of Education was recommended by the Department of Personnel Management and Training (DPMT) and DPMT proposed administrative and management practices substantially different from the traditional ones. In the traditional, highly centralized system, considerable power and authority have resided in the hands of a few senior administrators at headquarters. In the process of delegating more control over educational decision making to lower levels, senior administrators at headquarters may feel that their authority is being severely eroded. As such, one administrator noted:

> Decentralization is a threat to conservative top administrators. Such administrators are a liability ... rather than an asset to the implementation of a more decentralized system. The consequences of such conservatism could be high because it can, ironically, lead to chaotic administrative procedures.

This may imply that, although some policy makers at headquarters have accepted DPMT's recommendations for decentralization, others are not committed to it; hence, the feeling that the ministry was not ready to fully implement the new system.

Extent of Problems of Decentralization as Perceived by School Personnel

Table 8.02 presents a summary of responses from 21 heads of schools with respect to their perceptions of problems of the recently decentralized educational system. Heads saw four issues as presenting major problems. These were the Ministry not being ready (mean of 4.24), inadequate incentives (mean of 4.10), resource unavailability or insufficiency (mean of 4.05) and lack of commitment by senior administrators (mean of 4.05).

According to heads twelve items meet the criterion for moderate problems. Of these, seven have means of 3.5 or

Table 8.02

Extent of Problems of Decentralization Efforts as Perceived by School Personnel

Problems	Mean	S.D.	N	Rank
9. The Ministry not being ready to fully implement the new system	4.24	1.14	21	1
7. Inadequate positive incentives for the people expected to play a leading role	4.10	0.94	21	2
1. Resource unavailability or insufficiency	4.05	1.20	21	3.5
16. Lack of commitment by senior administrators to the realities of decentralization	4.05	1.07	21	3.5
18. Reluctance by the Ministry to delegate the planning function to the regional level	3.95	1.24	21	6
17. Inadequate organizational infrastructures for communication between and among the Ministry, Regional Offices and schools	3.95	1.16	21	6
13. Lack of a system to monitor successes and problems with implementation	3.95	0.81	21	6
8. Lower level administrators not receiving adequate education on the new system	3.81	1.03	21	8
4. Constraints caused by centrally determined rules and regulations	3.70	1.08	20	9

Table 8.02 (continued)

Table 8.02 continued

Problems	Mean	S.D.	N	Rank
10. Devising allocation formulae which are truly equitable	3.52	1.08	21	10
12. Lack of extensive preparation and pilot programs	3.50	1.32	20	11
2. Insufficient and unclear implementation procedures	3.43	1.23	21	12
14. Magnitude of the decentralization effort	3.32	1.29	19	13
3. Uncertainty regarding the new roles and responsibilities administrators at different educational levels are expected to assume	3.19	1.17	21	14
11. Increased responsibility and time demands for REOs, headmasters and headmistresses	3.14	1.39	21	15
6. Lack of ability and expertise at lower levels of the Ministry to exercise proper control	3.00	1.34	21	16
5. Lack of self-confidence on the part of all parties involved in decision making	2.86	1.20	21	17.5
15. Suddenness of the decentralization effort	2.86	1.32	21	17.5

Scale used was: 1 = not a problem to 5 = major problem

greater. Six of these are related to: reluctance by ministry to delegate the planning function to the regional level (mean of 3.95), inadequate organizational infrastructure for communication between and among levels (mean of 3.95), lack of a monitoring system (mean of 3.95), lower level administrators not receiving adequate education on the new system (mean of 3.81), constraints caused by centrally determined rules and regulations (mean of 3.70), devising allocation formulae which are truly equitable (mean of 3.52) and lack of extensive preparation and pilot programs (mean of 3.50). These problems appear to be as a result of the absence of changes in organizational structure that need to be made when moving from a centralized to a decentralized system. One of the other moderate problems with a lower mean "uncertainty regarding the new roles and responsibilities administrators at different levels are expected to assume" (mean of 3.19) relates to this same theme. It is worth noting that for heads, the problems of "increased responsibility and time demands" (item 11), "lack of ability and expertise to exercise proper control" (item 6), lack of self-confidence"(item 5) achieved mean scores of 3.14, 3.00 and 2.86 respectively.

Discussion

It appears that heads perceived that the education system under the recent decentralization reform is beset with relatively serious problems. The various education issues, however, present problems of varying degrees. Like the central office administrators, school-based administrators indicated that major problems related to the ministry not being ready, resource insufficiency, and lack of commitment by senior administrators. However, heads also saw inadequate incentives as a major problem. The four items identified as the most serious problems are interrelated. The recent decentralization reform envisaged significant investments in more attractive incentives and career paths especially for educational administrators. Most changes also required significant recurrent costs. Such investments pose difficult tradeoffs in the current financial and economic climate, in which resources for the management of the education system have remained the same or increased at an extremely low rate compared to the actual need. However, a number of respondents felt that when senior administrators at headquarters show commitment, they will endeavour to find the resources required to plan, implement and monitor policy changes that would address the obstacles to effective decentralization. Hence, the Ministry will be ready and able to provide the required incentives. According to heads who were interviewed, other issues which presented substantial problems, as indicated by school administrators, included unclear differentiation of authority and responsibility between headquarters and school level. This was attributed to inadequate dissemination of information to schools. Some heads saw centrally determined rules and regulations as constraints. One head noted: "Rules interfere with the notion of delegated authority. They take away our freedom to take risks and initiate actions."

Finally, it was also noted that lack of a clear implementation plan, guidelines and parameters from headquarters posed a problem.

Overall, the school administrators seemed to feel that the problems which hampered efficiency and effectiveness under the centralized system are still prevalent to a large extent.

Differences between Headquarters and School Administrators' Perceptions

During the discussion presented earlier in this chapter, occasional reference has been made to similarities and differences among the respondents' perceptions of the extent to which particular items presented problems. Both headquarters personnel and school administrators ranked the problem of the ministry not being ready (item 9) highest. However, headquarters respondents perceived this problem to be at par with the problem of resource insufficiency, while heads perceived inadequate incentives (item 7) as second highest. Heads ranked the issues of resource insufficiency and lack of commitment by senior administrators third. It is worth noting that while heads saw inadequate incentives as a major problem (mean of 4.10), headquarters personnel

Table 8.03

Differences on the Perceived Problems of Decentralization by Position

	Group 1 Ministry Personnel (N=15)		Group 2 School Personnel (N=19-21)		
Problems	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Differences in Means*
Lack of extensive preparation and pilot programs	2.47	1.06	3.50	1.31	1.03
Lack of system to monitor successes and problems with implementation	3.27	1.53	3.95	0.81	.68
Magnitude of decentralization effort	2.33	0.98	3.32	1.29	.99
Suddenness of decentralization effort	2.00	1.07	2.86	1.32	.86

Scale used was: 1 = not a problem to 5 = major problem

* Items where the difference in means between the two groups was .5 or greater

saw it as a moderate problem with a mean of 3.80.

Table 8.03 presents data on substantial differences that existed on the perceived problems of decentralization by headquarters and school administrators. The final column shows the difference between the means of the two groups. Only items where the mean difference was greater than .5 between the two groups are reported. Substantial differences were found in relation to four out of the eighteen items as indicated in Table 7.03. These results indicate that heads of schools perceived each of the four issues as more of a problem than did the administrators at headquarters.

Problems as Perceived by Educational Administrators at All Levels

Table 8.04 presents a summary of the problems associated with Malawi's efforts at decentralizing its education system as perceived by all respondents. The data in Table 8.04 identify five major problem areas. The problem with the highest mean score (4.36) was "the Ministry not being ready to fully implement the new system." This was followed by four other problems listed in descending order of their means: "resource unavailability or insufficiency" (4.18); "lack of commitment by senior administrators to the realities of decentralization" (4.10); "inadequate incentives" (4.03); and "reluctance to delegate" (4.0).

Table 8.04

Extent of Problems of Decentralization Efforts as Perceived by All Respondent Groups

Problems	Mean	S.D.	N	Rank
The Ministry not being ready to fully implement the new system	4.36	1.06	39	1
Resource unavailability or insufficiency	4.18	1.25	39	2
Lack of commitment by senior administrators to the realities of decentralization	4.10	1.12	39	3
Inadequate positive incentives for the people expected to play a leading role	4.03	1.14	39	4
Reluctance by the Ministry to delegate the planning function to the regional level	4.00	1.26	39	5
Inadequate organizational infrastructures for communication between and among the Ministry, Regional Offices and schools	3.92	1.13	39	6
Lower level administrators not receiving adequate education on the new system	3.80	1.06	39	7
Constraints caused by centrally determined rules and regulations	3.66	1.07	38	8
Lack of a system to monitor successes and problems with implementation	3.64	1.16	39	9
Devising allocation formulae which are truly equitable	3.44	1.17	39	10

Table 8.04 (continued)

Table 8.04 continued

Problems	Mean	S.D.	N	Rank
Uncertainty regarding the new roles and responsibilities administrators at different educational levels are expected to assume	3.33	1.20	39	11
Increased responsibility and time demands for REOs, headmasters and headmistresses	3.29	1.29	38	12
Insufficient and unclear implementation procedures	3.26	1.33	39	13
Lack of extensive preparation and pilot programs	3.13	1.34	38	14
Lack of ability and expertise at lower levels of the Ministry to exercise proper control	3.00	1.27	39	15
Magnitude of the decentralization effort	2.95	1.27	37	16
Lack of self-confidence on the part of all parties involved in decision making	2.72	1.23	39	17
Suddenness of the decentralization effort	2.56	1.33	39	18

Scale used was: 1 = not a problem to 5 = major problem

The next ten problems in rank order, located within the range of 3.0 to 3.9 inclusive, are regarded as moderately serious problems. Listed in descending order of their means, these problems were as follows:(1) inadequate organizational communication infrastructures; (2) lower level administrators not receiving adequate training on the new system; (3) constraints caused by centrally determined rules and regulations; (4) lack of a monitoring system; (5) devising equitable allocation formulae; (6) uncertainty regarding the new roles and responsibility; (7) increased responsibility and time demands for REOs and heads; (8) insufficient and unclear implementation procedures; (9) lack of extensive preparation and pilot programs; and (10) lack of ability and expertise at lower levels of the organization.

Lastly, the lowest-ranked problems, all with mean scores below 3.0 were "magnitude of the decentralization effort", "lack of self-confidence" and "suddenness of the decentralization effort."

It is worth noting that the five "major problems" relate either to the readiness of the Ministry to support the decentralization reform or reluctance to change at the executive level or resources. Issues that relate more closely to lower-level operations such as "increased responsibility and time demands" (item 12), "lack of ability and expertise to exercise proper control" (item 15) and "lack of self-confidence" (item 17) were relatively lower in the rating. This may suggest that, while administrators perceived that REOs and school administrators are relatively ready to take advantage of decentralization, they are constrained by the inflexibility imposed by insufficient resources with which to work and by the absence of the changes in organizational structure that are required when a system is moving from a more centralized to a more decentralized form of decision making.

Discussion and Suggestions for Improvement

The analysis of all administrators' responses suggests that they perceived that the major problems associated with efforts to decentralize the educational system pertained to the ministry not being ready, and to lack of resources as well as commitment by senior administrators to the realities of decentralization. It can be argued that these three problems are fundamental and their continued existence can impede the attainment of the decentralization objectives.

On resource unavailability or inefficiency, a number of administrators commented that while the central government had accepted DPMT's proposed reorganization of MOEST, it did not commit sufficient resources to effectively implement the decentralization reform. Commenting on the issue of financial constraints one respondent noted that decentralized management may be heralded as a more cost-efficient method of administration, but it does incur some costs of its own, for example, expenses for training and incentives for increased responsibilities. A number of respondents also noted shortage of office accommodation as a result of new positions which have been transferred from headquarters to lower levels as a problem related to inadequate resources.

Analysis of the problems reveals four categories of problems: (1) Implementation constraints; (2) Inadequate planning; (3) Senior personnel commitment; and (4) Resource constraints. It needs to be pointed out that all five issues that respondents perceived as major problems pertained to the categories of "senior personnel commitment" and "resource constraints." Close analysis of the issues that met the criterion of moderately serious problems reveals that they all pertained to the categories of "implementation constraints" and "inadequate planning."

The movement from centralized to decentralized forms of decision making requires several changes in organizational structure. The first of these changes relates to transfer of authority. It appears that efforts at decentralization in Malawi did not meet this requirement as evidenced by the lack of senior personnel commitment to the realities of decentralization and reluctance to delegate. Commenting on this perceived lack of commitment by senior personnel, one respondent noted:

> Although definitions of authority and responsibility for all levels of the Ministry have been approved, some senior officers do not want to let go. As long as management style does not change, not much will be achieved.

Another respondent argued that if the REOs and schools are to be given decision making authority which is meaningful, senior administrators at the upper levels of the organizational hierarchy must relinquish authority over operational decisions to REOs and heads of schools. It becomes more important that the senior administrators at ministry headquarters restrict themselves to policy matters and avoid becoming embroiled in operational concerns. Hence, the most significant change must occur at the executive level.

In relation to the problem of constraints caused by centrally determined rules and regulations (the eighth-ranked problem), one officer noted: "There is too much interference from headquarters. REOs and heads still have to consult headquarters before making decisions." Commenting on the same issue, the Alberta Teachers' Association (1990) in its position paper on school based budgeting and the policies following it, claimed that a process of deregulation is required. That is, headquarters must give up some of its managerial prerogatives and relinquish its power to make REO and school level decisions by regulation or decree.

On the other hand, it has also been argued that management under a decentralized system can function effectively when rules and regulations have been laid down. This will help to define what should be done at what level to avoid duplication of functions. Parry (1990, p. 83), observed that under decentralization, "rules and regulations are designed to promote impartial decision making, accountability, administrative consistency and efficiency, reduce uncertainty and arbitrariness, introduce flexibility, choice and competition and reduce centralized bureaucracy."

Other Implementation requirements include the following:

1. Formulate clear policy guidelines. According to Bloomer (1991), developing clear policy guidelines which will assist the process of decentralization is crucial. He argued that if decentralization is intended to introduce greater delegation of authority, it is important that this concept be built into the process of policy making and review. Bloomer felt "there is no point in having a declared intention of delegating if the policy statements being issued start from the assumption that all important decisions will originate from ministry headquarters" (Bloomer, 1991, p. 8). Policies should incorporate a decentralist approach to educational management. Experienced decentralized educational systems emphasize the need for decentralization policies that clearly define new roles and differentiate responsibilities for all personnel in order to reduce uncertainty. Unclear differentiation of authority may lead to conflicts.

A number of officers also noted the problem of lack of an implementation plan on the part of the Ministry. They reckoned that although the DPMT report has been adopted, it is very extensive and costly to reproduce. Hence, the problem in distribution. Most respondents therefore, felt that there was a need for implementation guidelines with objectives clearly stated and communicated to all levels.

2. Communicate proposed changes. Once clear policy guidelines have been formulated they should be effectively communicated. The results indicated that the respondents perceived the problem of "inadequate organizational infra-structure for communication between and among levels" as a moderately serious problem, very close to meeting the criterion for major problems. It has been argued that effective decentralization requires solid infra-structures for communication between and among the different levels of the organization. Information should flow both up and down the administrative hierarchy of the education system. A number of administrators noted that ineffective communication of policy guidelines has led to conflict.

Referring to the problem of uncertainty regarding the new roles and responsibilities administrators at different levels are expected to assume, one respondent commented that "The whole thing is not clear cut. The Ministry does not appear to have clearly defined new roles. Worse still it has not developed its own implementation plan." The issue of clarity is a persistent problem in the change process. The more complex the reform the greater the problem of clarity. In other words, unspecified means of implementation represent a major problem at the implementation stage. As evidenced by the above comment, lower level administrators find that it is not clear as to what is expected of them. Unclear and unspecified changes can cause great anxiety and frustration to those sincerely trying to implement them.

Another officer attributed the problem to inadequate circulation of the DPMT report which outlines the changes in roles for the different levels of the Ministry. The officer argued for "equitable dissemination of information so no body has the upper hand." Hence, most respondents suggested the need for clear and open communication channels between headquarters and lower levels.

3. Provide staff development. A number of respondents also noted the problem of a lack of preparation of senior administrators for the new system. One administrator noted that at the time of the study, "no in-service had been arranged for senior administrators at ministry headquarters to educate them on the concept of decentralization." The administrator argued that "Senior officers, like REOs and heads need training in order to effectively execute the their new roles and responsibilities. It may also help the conservative senior staff change their attitudes toward the new system." The problem of preparing personnel to cope with a change effort of the magnitude of the decentralization efforts in Malawi is not a new one. It is common to have change efforts fail to reach their potential because those required to implement the change have not been

properly prepared for the change. The importance of staff development in these efforts is universal.

The key to successful delegation must be the creation of an effective management structure at all levels of the ministry. Whatever form the structure may take, an indispensable element is effective day-to-day professional management. Hence, in-service, especially management training for those who are expected to take on new roles, is central to any program of decentralization. Where decentralized educational management has been successful, such as in Edmonton, Canada, substantial investments have been made in additional staff development. In-service often focuses on themes such as developing planning and decision making skills, creative problem solving, group dynamics, and team building. Heads of schools have received additional administrative and management skills.

4. Development of a monitoring mechanism. Another basic problem noted relates to the implementation monitoring system. In response to an open-ended question a number of respondents suggested the "establishment of a monitoring system which would help the Ministry follow up on how effective the new policy was being implemented." It was observed that the body which was in place to monitor the implementation process was inefficient. Some respondents preferred an independent monitoring body rather than leaving monitoring to heads of sections in the ministry. Obviously, in a change effort of this magnitude a formal monitoring

process with built in feedback loops is needed. Such a system should ensure that the views of all stakeholders are heard from Ministry level to individual schools. The monitoring should be frequent and the results of the monitoring disseminated widely to all concerned. Ministry headquarters must also create the structures required to monitor decisions made at the REOs and institutional levels and ensure that they are consistent with national education policy.

5. Provide ongoing Ministry support. Fundamental change in the way in which the ministry of education makes decisions must be accompanied by solid support from senior administrators at ministry headquarters. Having dismantled the traditional mechanisms for centralized decision making, ministry headquarters had to replace these with mechanisms designed to advise and assist REOs and school personnel to whom responsibilities had been delegated for decision making regarding operational matters. One respondent in support of this view suggested that the Ministry should "provide support mechanisms for lower level personnel."

Absence of any one or more of the structural requirements identified above poses as an obstacle to the success of decentralization efforts.

In the preceding discussion a number of suggestions have been made for improvement. This section focuses on suggestions from the respondents' perspective in response to an open question on suggestions for improvement. Twenty-three of the thirty-nine respondents offered suggestions for enhancing the effectiveness of the educational decentralization policy in Malawi. Since most of the suggestions have been discussed above, a list of all suggestions made by respondents at all levels has been included as Appendix G. However, it is worthwhile to note that the most frequently listed suggestions were those relating to finances, monitoring, staff development and delegation of more powers and authority to REOs and schools.

It is also worth noting that some respondents appear to advocate for the participative approach to decision making. This is evident in their suggestions that "juniors" and heads of departments should be involved in decision making. According to Owen (1991), the degree of participation in decision making is considered to be an important indicator of effectiveness in educational organizations. Owen argued that participation is valued for better decisions which lead to increased productivity and the potential growth and development of the participants. Beare (1977) noted that when we refer to "participation in education," the issue of who are the main actors, that is the ones without whom the play cannot begin at all, arises. In the context of this study, apart from students, the main actors are teachers some of whom hold the portfolio of head of department and middle level administrators.

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter examined the perceptions of educational administrators at three levels as to the extent of problems under the recently decentralized Malawi's educational system. Two major categories of problems related to: (1) senior personnel commitment and (2) resource constraints.

Senior personnel commitment and resource constraints were the major concern for educational administrators at all three levels. The respondents perceived implementation constraints and inadequate planning as moderately serious problem. A well-defined and realistic implementation plan plays a significant role in any program of decentralization and can be seen a prerequisite of success. The absence of "requirements" such as transfer of authority, deregulation, staff development, monitoring mechanisms and others identified earlier in this chapter can pose as major obstacles to effective educational decentralization in Malawi. According to Bloomer (1991), successful decentralization requires that appropriate mechanisms exist for sharing functions and powers among the various levels of the Ministry. He suggested that a scheme of delegation and a well-defined policy framework may prove particularly helpful in clarifying the process of decentralization and establishing a structure which functions efficiently.

In recent years educational policy analysts have developed a strong consensus around the importance of the school/level managers, headmasters or headmistresses.

Hence, along with a scheme of delegation, Bloomer argued for the existence of some structure of authority at a school level. This calls for officers of reasonable seniority, able to exercise initiative and take decisions. Experience has shown that heads of schools as well as senior personnel at regional educational offices are appointed from among teachers to take on leadership and management responsibilities. Many of these people take on their responsibilities without proper training. Under the new decentralized system, these educational administrators are given autonomy and authority and are expected to engage in new leadership and management functions such as financial and personnel management. In order for them to be successful in their new roles, they require the necessary leadership and management knowledge and skills. Hence, the need for proper training.

Resources were another major concern for all respondents. The system was perceived as being characterised by "very highly constrained resource availability." Hence, many interviewees, particularly heads, asserted that the issues of insufficient allocation of resources and inadequate incentives as major problems. It has been observed that these two issues are closely linked because lack of resources is a strong disincentive to productivity. With respect to the issue of insufficient resource allocation, an administrator at headquarters remarked that:

> As a result of insufficient resource allocation, secondary schools teachers are not properly supervised. The few visits made are so short that no meaningful problem diagnosis is done to benefit the teachers, students and the system as a whole. Schools are faced with the problem of infrequent visits because of lack of transport and other financial constraints.

Respondents generally felt that most of the problems that the new education system was experiencing were as a result of the inherent problems with resources. There is a need for the central government, policy makers in consultation with other stakeholders, especially lower level administrators to address the problems identified. The continued existence of such problems will pose as obstacles to the success of the decentralized decision making and adversely affect the quality of education under the new policy.

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The study contains information which was obtained from a survey questionnaire, document analysis and interviews on educational decentralization efforts in Malawi. This chapter provides a summary and discussion of the findings. In addition, implications of findings are outlined with regard to practice, theory and research. The chapter ends with a series of recommendations and the researcher's personal reflections on the study.

Overview of the Study

This study examined the perceptions of control over educational decision making in relation to government secondary education in Malawi. Hence, the three major purposes were: (a) to examine the degrees of control which were exerted over decisions by organizational levels with respect to two periods of time, before the 1989/90 decentralization reform and at the time of the study in 1994; (b) to identify the changes in the degree of control between the two periods of time; (c) to explore the relationship between the perceived locus of actual and preferred control at the time of the study in 1994.

In addition, this study examined the origin, nature and objectives of the decentralization policy, perceived benefits and problems associated with the decentralization efforts in Malawi.

The major research instrument was the questionnaire. Questionnaires were distributed to 56 education administrators which included all senior educational administrators at headquarters and REOs, and all heads of government secondary schools in Malawi. 39 questionnaires were returned (69.6%). Interviews were conducted with 10 specifically selected educational administrators to provide additional information and clarification. Responses were tabulated, clustered, and summarized through content and statistical analyses of data from the questionnaire and interviews. Documents were examined to develop background for the study.

The Findings of the Study

The detailed findings of the study are presented in Chapters 5 to 8. In this section the findings are summarized into seven categories according to the research questions that were addressed in the study.

It is very important to bear in mind that the findings in this study are based on data collected at a specific time and that the educational decentralization policy being examined was still being implemented. Hence, it is possible that perceptions of loci of control over educational decisions as well as benefits and problems associated with the new policy might have changed since the data were collected.

1. The Origin, Objectives, and Proposed Nature of Decentralization

Based on the analysis of documents as verified in interviews growing pressures to decentralize the education system in Malawi originated from fiscal and intellectual pressures from the World Bank and other international donors, and from the government's own assessment of the inadequacy of highly centralized administration. Centralized administration was associated with several key management and administrative problems. The traditional over-centralized system was found to be no longer appropriate for the late 20th century schooling needs. The bureaucratized and burdensome procedures employed by the Ministry of Education was making it increasingly difficult for the schools to operate effectively. Hence, the government supported by the World Bank and other international agencies put forward a policy proposal that MOEST should adopt a more decentralized approach which is both responsive and accountable at all levels.

The government's objectives for adopting decentralized management may be summarized as follows: (a) to improve effectiveness; (b) to improve efficiency; (c) to speed up decision making process and make the education system more responsive.

On the basis of a comprehensive review of the responsibilities, structures, administrative arrangements and operating practices of the Ministry of Education, DPMT recommended major strategic, structural and procedural changes. The proposed nature of educational decentralization in Malawi consists of the following characteristics:

(1) Restructuring of the ministry with the view to reduce organizational layers and levels which meant new organizational structures for headquarters as well as REOs. Restructuring and reorganization were evident at the ministry headquarters and REOs in a number of ways:

(a) A number of positions were upgraded and retitled. For example, the positions of Chief Inspector of Schools and Chief Education Officer were upgraded and retitled to that of Chief Methods Advisor and Controller of Education Services respectively. Some positions were eliminated.

(b) With decentralization, the REOs were to be granted more power and authority to take effective responsibility for the overall management and educational leadership of all schools and colleges within their boundaries. To reflect this high profile, the position of the Regional Education Officer was upgraded. In keeping with the new responsibilities each REO was to be assigned two deputy REOs to be in charge of (a) Educational Administration and (b) Inspectorate. New positions of inspector of schools and educational administration were either created or transferred from headquarters. A number of posts were transferred from administration and accounting at Headquarters to the REOs. However, while most of the positions in education administration were filled and in operation at the time of the study, positions of subject inspectors and regional planning officers were not yet filled.

(c) At the school level restructuring took the form of (i) redefining the headmaster's or headmistress's role and workload adjustment to commensurate with the increase in administrative and managerial responsibilities; (ii) strengthening of the position of deputy headmaster or headmistress with monetary incentives and redefinition of the deputy heads' role which included management of teaching services in a school through heads of departments; (iii) strengthening and redefining of the head of department's role and workload adjustment to enable the incumbent effectively to play the role of school based inspector. As such, the position had monetary incentives attached to it.

2. Decentralized decision making over most operational functions and delegated control over budgeting and related decisions to regional, district and institutional levels. The REOs and institutions were to be granted authority to make decisions regarding their operations and were to be given a budget to cover most of their needs with clear guidelines and parameters. For example, REOs were to be given wider responsibility over payment for goods and services; building maintenance; the management and decision making on operational issues of educational administration; and some aspects of planning. The report also proposed

school based supervision by headmasters or headmistresses and heads of departments.

In short, the recent educational decentralization policy in Malawi proposed decentralization of most operational decisions pertaining to finance and budgeting, and student and personnel management. Headquarters was to concentrate on policy, overall planning, curriculum development, supervision of regional activities, research and evaluation.

Discussion

It is clear that DPMT recommended organizational decentralization for the education system. However, educational decentralization in Malawi is to be understood not just in terms of its delineation in the 1989 DPMT review report, but in the broader context of general trends to decentralization in both private and public sector organizations. Changes in educational management and organization similar to educational decentralization in Malawi have occurred in other countries since the mid 1970s, particularly in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Nigeria, and Ghana (Brown, 1990; Caldwell, 1990; Levacic, 1992; Mankoe, 1992). The organizational forms, whatever their precise names, have common elements. However, despite the commonalities, they are different in important respects.

To further understand the organizational forms of decentralization, Brown (1990, p. 60) distinguishes between organizational and political decentralization. He explains that organizational decentralization occurs when "the central office may delegate authority to make certain kinds of decisions to specific levels further down the hierarchy," whereas "political decentralization implies some form of semi-autonomous local control, perhaps via boards of elected officials." Brown noted two minor but significant differences between the two forms. First, while organizationally decentralized organizations can re-centralize through administrative action, politically decentralized structures would likely call for legislative action. Second, in organizational decentralization, personnel are accountable to their superordinates or those higher in the organization; whereas in political decentralization, they are more accountable to the people who elected them.

Based on the results of this study and the foregoing explanation of the two forms of decentralization, it can be concluded that educational decentralization in Malawi may be labelled organizational rather than political. As organizational decentralization, the Malawi policy has much in common with decentralizing moves in a wide range of private and public sector organizations.

The objectives of educational decentralization in Malawi are similar to those noted in similar studies by (Hannaway & Carnoy, 1993; Levacic, 1992; Brown, 1990;

Caldwell & Spinks, 1988; Caldwell, 1977). According to Caldwell (1977), the objectives may be broadly classified as relating to (1) the achievement of the principle of subsidiarity or the delegation of authority for most functional decisions from central office to levels as close as possible to where decisions are to be effected; (2) accountability and effectiveness; and (3) efficiency. Delegation of authority empowers educational administrators at lower levels. Efficiency was related to the use of resources. In relation to accountability and effectiveness, it has been noted that if schools and organizational levels closest to schools are made more responsive in order to meet the different needs of schools, education can be improved. Thus Mintzberg (1979) asserted that decentralization permits quick response to local conditions. Kochen and Deutsch (1980) considered the concept of responsiveness in terms of the time needed to deliver an acceptable response. They suggested that responsiveness implies not just that a service agency respond to a client's request, but that the response be rendered within a time deemed reasonable by the client.

The results also revealed that there was evidence of restructuring of the MOEST as a result of the decentralization policy. It is important to note that the concept of restructuring can have various, conflicting and often ill-defined meanings. Among the many and varied possible components of restructuring, in relation to school-based management, Hargreaves (1994) noted the decentralization of authority and decision making to site level. He further noted that despite variations in the specific components, there appears to be an agreement that what is centrally involved in restructuring is fundamental redefinition of rules, roles, responsibilities and relationships. Whatever meaning was attached to the concept in relation to Malawi, the basic principles involved are consistent with what Hargreaves (1994) noted. Hence, the process met the criteria for restructuring.

2. Factors that Influenced a More Decentralized Educational System

According to the questionnaire respondents, the following factors (listed in rank order) were perceived to have had very important influence in the introduction and development of a more decentralized educational system in Malawi: (1) a desire for efficiency in the administration of education; (2) concern with the effectiveness of educational administration; (3) the increased size of the Ministry of Education and culture; and (4) pressure from donors such as the World Bank. Other less important influences are identified in Chapter 4.

Discussion

Desire for efficiency and concern with effectiveness had very important influence in the introduction and development of the decentralization policy in Malawi. This finding appears to be consistent with the argument put forward in favour of decentralization by a number of scholars (Hannaway & Carnoy, 1993; Macpherson, 1993; Caldwell & Spinks, 1992). Caldwell and Spinks (1992, p. 14) acknowledged that it is "simply more efficient and effective ... to restructure systems of education so that central bureaucracies are relatively small and schools are empowered to manage their own affairs within centrally determined framework of direction and support." Concern with responsiveness and priorities for resource allocation in times of economic restraints have been offered as the main arguments.

According to Brown (1990), educational efficiency is concerned with reduction of costs and the performance of schools, in other words, maximal consumer satisfaction at minimal costs. Decentralized management is believed to enhance efficiency. The efficiency rationale in decentralization focuses on the cost of decision making in a highly centralized system where even the most minor local education matters must be decided by a geographically distant bureaucracy. Brown suggested that expenditure decisions, when made by people who will be asked to pay bills, may be lower in cost. It is also believed that school personnel know best how much to spend on a given function relative to other priorities.

Concern for effectiveness stemmed from the fact that policy formation appeared to have become overly centralized and non-responsive to the perceived needs of schools. Policy advisory and policy making services had become confused with policy implementation. Priority in management had been given to administrative co-ordination, to continuity and policy fidelity, rather than to responsiveness, empowerment and professional involvement.

It has also been argued that centralized management reduces the accountability of schools to their customers (students). However, administration and accountability can be improved in education if schools or levels closest to the schools are made more responsive to parents and to the local community, and if the need for the ministry headquarters to make decisions on local education matters is eliminated.

Hence, by giving REOs and school administrators authority and power over operational decisions, it was hoped that the system would become more responsive with the ultimate goal being to raise the quality of teaching and learning.

Weiler (1990, p. 44), offers three models or arguments for decentralization: (a) the "redistribution" model, which has to do with the sharing of power; (b) the "efficiency" model, which is geared to enhancing the cost-effectiveness of the educational system through a more efficient deployment and management of available resources; and (c) the "cultures of learning" model, which emphasises the decentralization of educational content. He noted a number of variants of the three models both in the literature and in the educational policies of different countries. Essentially, the three models respond to different political and social dynamics and have different effects on both the educational system and its environment. An analysis of the educational decentralization policy in Malawi indicates that the policy was based on the efficiency model. The rationale for the more decentralized reform is based on the claim that decentralization may yield considerable efficiency in the management of the educational system. This claim involves the expectation that a decentralized system can utilize available resources more effectively.

Increase in size or organizational growth, as one of the factors that can lead to restructuring supported by Bolman and Deal (1991, P. 95) was found to be based on the argument that:

> Organizations try to retain their existing form as long as possible in order to maintain internal consistency and to avoid upsetting the existing equilibrium. But if the environment changes while the organization remains static, the structure gets more and more out of touch with the environment. Eventually, the gap becomes so wide that the organization is forced to do major overhaul.

With increase in size, it becomes a problem for a centrally managed organization to obtain and process sufficient information to enable it to take effective decisions. According to Levacic (1992), first there is the problem that individuals have limited capacity to process information and second is the problem of obtaining the right information from those further down the bureaucratic chain of command.

The finding about pressure from donors, such as the World Bank, in relation to developing countries has been noted by a number of scholars such as Ilon (1994) and Iqbal and Davies (1994). Ilon wrote that "for most scholars of education and development, structural adjustment brings to mind World Bank and IMF loans to poor countries and the conditionalities that accompany them." She further noted that "the package of changes that go with such loans often means fundamental changes in educational programs for the country." Although she was discussing structural adjustment, these two statements portray the key role that World Bank and IMF play in major organizational changes such as move to decentralized management. The role of The World Bank can not be underestimated because they are likely to back their views with money and technical advice and thus to have a strong influence on developing countries. With regards to Malawi, it was noted in chapter 4 that educational decentralization in Malawi was initially recommended in a "staff appraisal report of the first education sector credit for the Republic of Malawi," a World Bank document. Decentralization was a requirement for the credit to be granted.

3. Actual Degree of Control

At the time of the study in 1994, ministry headquarters, heads of schools and regional educational offices were perceived to have major control over the decision items. Ministry headquarters was perceived to exercise major control over thirty-two of the fifty-one decision items, followed by heads who were seen to have the highest degree of control over 16 of the 51 decisions. Ministry headquarters appeared to dominate or had major control over more than half of the items in all the categories except student management, and community relations which were dominated by heads of schools. Both levels were not reported to have the least control for any of the fifty-one items. The REO was reported to have the least control over twenty-two items and the most control over only three decision items. Academic departments and teachers were perceived as the groups with least control over three and twenty-six items respectively. Both groups were perceived to have no major control over any of the fifty-one decision items. The findings with respect to teachers are not consistent with those of other researchers in more developed countries such as Ewanyshyn (1986) who found that in Alberta teachers had the highest degree of control over instructional methods.

4. Preferred Locus of Control

According to respondents, school administrators should have the highest control over thirty-three of the fifty-one items as opposed to only sixteen that they were perceived to control at the time. They preferred that heads should have more control over the majority of the items in most decision categories except capital expenditure, curriculum and instruction. Respondents preferred that control over items in the decision category pertaining to capital expenditure, which was dominantly controlled by headquarters, should be distributed between the three levels (MHQ, REO and HOS). Respondents also preferred that REOs should have major control over six instead of only three decision items. However, instead of having control over payment for equipment and services and provision of transport, which respondents felt should be the heads' concerns, the REOs should have control over staff salaries, location of new school, type of school to build, provision of furniture, appointment of teachers and in-service training. All these six items were perceived to be controlled by ministry headquarters at the time of the study.

Respondents felt that the ministry should retain major control over only eleven decision items pertaining most decision categories except equipment, supplies and expenditure and community relations categories. Respondents also felt that teachers should have major control over instructional methods.

In general, the status quo appeared to be acceptable to the respondents regarding the community relations decision category and twenty-three items distributed over the rest of the categories.

5. Changes in the Degree of Control

A number of changes were noted in the locus of control over certain educational decisions affecting government secondary education. Most significant changes have occurred in the categories of finance and budgeting, equipment, supplies and services and personnel management (Table 6.20). One of the major changes in implementing decentralized budgets has been changing to a school cost centre accounting system and introducing a financial management and control outline procedure manual to strengthen the financial planning, management and control.

No significant differences between headquarters and school administrators with respect to perceived changes in the degree of control over educational decisions were apparent except for three items. The three items pertained to the category of finance and budgeting. Both groups perceived change for the three items but for two of the items (allocation of funds to a school and payment for school equipment) heads perceived a higher degree of change than did policy makers at ministry headquarters. The reverse was noted for the third item (distribution of expenditures within a school).

Discussion

In relation to government secondary education, the aim of educational decentralization in Malawi was to delegate control over operational decisions to REOs and schools. The results clearly show that the most significant changes had occurred in the process of financial management. There had been a nation-wide move to decentralize major aspects of financial management to the REO and to the school levels. One of the major tasks in implementing decentralized financial management had been changing to a school cost centre accounting system. Most of the funds put at the disposal of the school are ledger entries at the REO which the REO transfers into and out of the school's budget share account. Hence, financial control procedures are to be undertaken both by the schools and REO.

Notwithstanding that the study was only an interim review and assessment of progress with the implementation of the decentralization policy, it is worth noting that at the time of the study, in 1994, delegation pertaining to most of the decisions stipulated in the DPMT report such as personnel and student management, maintenance and inspection had not yet been implemented.

Interestingly, the present study indicated that respondents were generally not satisfied with the status quo regarding control over most decisions. It was generally agreed among those surveyed that at the time of the study, most of the decisions were still controlled at headquarters, followed by heads of schools. In fact, respondents advocated a reversal of the status quo regarding control over most educational decisions by headquarters and heads of schools. It appeared that respondents preferred that heads of schools, not headquarters or REOs, should have major control over schools' operational decisions. This preference suggests an awareness that the days when education was dominated by the control of ministry headquarters might be over. Indeed, power for decision making cannot be retained at the top if headquarter authorities expect schools to be responsive to local needs.

What educational administrators in Malawi are advocating in terms of giving schools more authority over decisions that they have to implement is in line with trends of decentralized approaches to educational decision making, often labelled as "school-based management" or "school site management" in Canada and the United States of America; "local school management in the United Kingdom; "self-managed schools" in Australia (Caldwell & Spinks, 1992; Levacic, 1992; Levin, 1992; Lopez, 1992; Brown, 1990).

6. Perceived Benefits

Educational administrators as a group perceived all items presented in the study as either major or moderate benefits of educational decentralization efforts in Malawi. Sixteen of the twenty-two potential benefits were perceived as major benefits. The items which ranked highest with mean scores of above 4.5 were: "delegates decision making to those who have responsibility for implementing the decision" and "gives schools more authority to control educational resources."

Significant differences were found in only six out of the twenty-two items on the perceived benefits of decentralization efforts by headquarters and school administrators (Table 6.03). Interestingly, these results indicated that administrators at headquarters perceived each of the six issues as more of benefits that did the school administrators.

Discussion

Rondinelli, Nellis and Cheema (1984) warned that decentralization requires a lengthy period of gestation before its benefits can be realized. In the early stages it is normal to experience confusion, uncertainty, lack of confidence, or hesitation to take the initiative on the part of the officials to whom new responsibilities are transferred, lack of commitment or reluctance to delegate on the part of senior officers at headquarters. The results on the benefits of decentralization efforts have a number of implications for the REOs and schools in Malawi. It is hoped that with time, full implementation of the decentralization policy will enhance the achievement of the following: (a) the capacity for swift financial decision making; (b) without the need for repeated consultation with the ministry over budget decisions, teachers and heads will become more motivated as they are able to discuss requirements with the headmaster or headmistress and receive speedy decisions and action; (c) responsiveness to student needs will be enhanced by control over local budgets allowing local decisions to be taken at local level, with local implications in mind (Dixon, 1991). These implications would help deal with the frustrations school personnel experienced under the highly centralized management such as delays in the acquisition of teaching and learning materials. Dixon (1991) also noted that accountability at the school level can be greater than was possible at headquarters because of greater awareness of the effects of financial decisions at local level.

7. Perceived Problems

Findings with respect to respondents' perceptions of problems were presented in Chapter 8. Educational administrators as a group perceived fifteen out of the eighteen potential problems presented in the study as either major or moderately serious problems of educational decentralization efforts in Malawi. Five of the fifteen problems were perceived as major problem areas. The ministry not being ready; resource unavailability or insufficiency; lack of commitment by senior administrators; inadequate incentives; and reluctance to delegate were noted as major problem areas. Other issues posed as moderately serious problems and only three issues were perceived as the least salient of the problems.

In relation to differences on the perceived problems by headquarters and school administrators, significant differences were found in relation to four out of the eighteen items (Table 7.04). It is worth noting that these results indicated that school administrators perceived each of the four issues as more of a problem than did the administrators at headquarters.

Discussion

Rondinelli et al. (1990) noted that projects promoting educational reforms in developing countries possed major management challenges. The literature on decentralization in educational governance in Africa indicated that the most frequently highlighted obstacles to the success of decentralization include: resource unavailability or insufficiency; magnitude and suddenness of change; role conflict and role ambiguity; lack of commitment by senior administrators; and inadequate incentives for the employees to work efficiently for the public good (Mankoe, 1992; Rondinelli, Middleton, & Verspoor, 1990; Blunt, 1984). Three out of these five obstacles (resource unavailability or insufficiency; lack of commitment by senior administrators; and inadequate incentives) were perceived as major problems in relation to Malawi's decentralization efforts. The perceived problems in this study were generally consistent with those discussed in the review of theory and practice in Chapter 3.

Like any educational change, in order to facilitate the implementation of decentralization there is a need for extensive preparation followed by pilot programs and a monitoring system. Pilot project provide an extensive amount of learning. Many issues arise at different levels of the organization, which need to be addressed in the implementation of the change. A study of the reform as a large scale experiment without pilot studies predicts unintended consequences. When these unintended consequences are negative, they are of particular concern.

Implications for Practice, Research and Theory

This section discusses implications which were drawn from the findings of this study and related literature. First, the implications for practice are discussed, followed by the implications for theory and research.

Implications for Practice

Decentralization of Control. The high degree of perceived control by the ministry headquarters suggests that although most decisions in the categories of finance and budgeting, and equipment, supplies and services had been decentralized to the REOs and school levels, control over most educational decisions especially those related to curriculum, administration and personnel matters still resided with headquarters. Numerous questions about the high degree of control by the ministry over educational decisions might be raised. For example, will the shifts in control to REOs and schools continue as recommended? How will issues of autonomy and accountability be dealt with? Will there be a time when the concept of self-managed schools will emerge in Malawi's education system?

Commenting on decentralization of policy implementation in Sub-Saharan Africa, The World Bank (1989) argued that effective decentralization requires devolution of operational responsibility for finance as well as administration, student and staff matters to the regional offices and schools. The Bank suggested that many decisions can be decentralized, to different degrees and in many ways. Decisions, responsibility, and authority can be assigned to various levels. In a bureaucracy, what to assign, to which level down the hierarchy, when, and for what purposes are key issues.

Caldwell (1977) noted that centralization and decentralization are not mutually exclusive or dichotomous arrangements for governance. Few, if any, countries are either totally centralized or totally decentralized. The challenge for the Ministry of Education in Malawi, like most developing countries, is to find the proper balance between centralized and decentralized arrangements and to link them in ways that promote efficiency and effectiveness for the country. The optimal mix is not easily determined because it shifts as social, economic, and political conditions change.

There was some evidence of resistance to change by senior administrators at headquarters. In the traditional, highly centralized systems of public education, considerable power and authority have resided in the hands of a few central office administrators. Ewanyshyn (1986, p. 187) pointed out that "a high concentration of control at one organizational level may reduce the balance of control in the educational system, and increase resistance to change and innovation."

In the process of delegating more control over educational decision making to lower administrative levels, headquarters authority may be severely eroded. According to Bray (1984), decentralization of power is often resisted by officers at the centre who do not wish to lose their political influence. The effective implementation of increased decentralization would require a radical reshaping of the relations between top management and the lower levels of the education system. Otherwise, decentralization is difficult to achieve where top management has the "I can do it better myself" belief, or where there is a lack of competence to direct subordinate officers and lack of confidence in these subordinate officers' decision making. There is a need for increased trust in the administration at lower levels of the system. It is only if decentralization is accompanied by a real change in the decision making process that there will be a true modification in the distribution of power.

Some of the obstacles to the implementation of decentralization may be summarized as not being ready, inadequate training, reluctance to give up traditional prerogatives, restrictions imposed by headquarters and lack of a well established monitoring system. A review of the literature and a close examination of school-based decision making of Edmonton Public School District in Alberta, Canada illustrates that as with all managerial activities, the more successful decentralization efforts are those that are thoroughly planned and carefully implemented. Analysis of the more successful efforts at educational decentralization lead to the following suggestions as operational principals:

1. Much can be achieved through small-scale, incremental transfers of powers and responsibilities. The smaller the program, the less threatening it will be and the less demanding of resources and personnel. Small programs are easily controlled and evaluated and are easier to learn from and to re-adjust. Successful small efforts can be expanded incrementally as personnel attain greater skill and as the organization gains the capacity to plan and manage administrative activities.

2. Following decentralization efforts a considerable period of time seems needed before some of the benefits can be realized. For example, some of its success depend on changes in attitudes and behaviour that have been bred by and maintained through highly centralized structures and procedures. As such, decentralization requires thorough design, analysis, and preparation, which, in turn, requires

a relatively long period following implementation before positive results can be realized. Because decentralization often goes against tradition and custom, and against the interests of those whose support is most important for its success, it cannot be implemented without some degree of conflict. The conflict can only be resolved through persuasion and re-education, processes that require a great deal of time.

3. Decentralization of any sort imposes additional or different burdens on administrators and institutions. Staff at all levels must be informed of their new responsibilities and instructed on how to carry them out. At the same time decentralization implies a new set of roles for central administrators, requiring less central initiation and greater facilitation of decentralized planning, decision making and management. In-service education could help to reorient central administrators to their new tasks of supervision and support.

4. Decentralization policies that transfer financial resources as well as power and responsibilities will be more successful than those that merely call for consultation with lower levels.

5. Authority and decision-making should be decentralized so that most operational decisions are made at the school or levels closest to the schools. The issue concerning the degree to which school-based administrators, teachers and even parents, and the students should together

set the basic direction for the school and determine strategies and the organizational and instructional arrangements needed to achieve them is one that will also have to be addressed. It is worth noting that review of the Education Act reveals that there is provision for such participative approach in decision making at the school level. The Education Act (1968, p. 16), stipulates that "the Minister may, by order published in the gazette, establish a Board of Governors for any Government school or group of Government schools." The order grants the board of governors the duty of management of the school or group of schools as specified. The representation on the board includes the Ministry, parents, the community and interested organizations. However, it appears that with regards to government secondary schools, the Ministry has not made use of this provision.

In some countries, efforts at decentralizing educational decision making have extended to encompass parents and community groups in school councils that are given considerable decision making authority over school budgets and school operations. Local participation has been associated with development in that it has enabled national governments to request material and financial inputs from local communities and thus reduce financial pressures on the centre. One wonders whether pilot efforts in this direction would be desirable for the improvement of government secondary education in Malawi. Afterall, one may argue that in principle, such kind of participation has been in practiced for years in relation to the provision of primary education through self-help projects or financial inputs from local communities and LEAs.

6. While a number of educational systems wish to encourage decentralization within a framework which maintains common standards and sound educational principles throughout the system, it is important to be aware that issues of control and regulation can arise in a way which pits democracy against efficiency.

7. Monitoring of the implementation process is quite essential. It is just as important as measuring outcomes. According to Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991, P. 87), the success of implementation is highly dependent on the establishment of effective ways of getting information on how well or poorly a change is going in the system. Hence, it is imperative that either an internal or external "tracking" system be institutionalized to assess and address problems of implementation. Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991, P. 213) suggested that "the more horizontal and vertical two-way communication that exists, the more knowledge there will be about the status of change." This does not necessarily call for formal research, but for competent people in the system to be concerned about improvement through careful observation, questioning, and discussions. Such a system could give early warnings of problems and considerably improve implementation.

Leadership of the Headmasters' or Headmistresses' Office. By having control over their school budget, schools have an obligation to fulfil the objectives laid down by the ministry. Responsiveness to student needs will need to be enhanced by the control over local budgets allowing local decisions to be taken at the local level, with local implications in mind. Hence, the headmaster's role will include the management of the available resources.

There was an indication that respondents preferred that heads of schools should have more control over decisions that directly affect schools than they had at the time of the study. This suggests that the heads' control over some decision areas may well continue to increase. New opportunities may exist for schools to move towards a higher degree of self-management. In view of a possible higher degree of control at the school level a number of questions are pertinent. For example, what is an appropriate level of devolution for Malawian government schools? The World Bank (1988) suggested that:

> At the school level, where responsibility for the quality of instruction lies, headteachers should be given the authority necessary to achieve such quality. The headteachers should have genuine voice, if not the final say, in all of the following: the appointment, discipline, and dismissal of teachers; the adaptation of curriculum and classroom schedules to local circumstances; the establishment of effective relationships with the community organizations; the generation of local resources; and, most important, within centrally provided guidelines and a system of accountability, the use of locally generated revenues (p. 84).

Morphet, Johns and Reller (1967) also suggested that decisions made centrally should consist of decisions which do not require or involve local initiative and responsibility and can be done more efficiently and economically on a centralized basis. Decisions should be decentralized and carried out at the local level (or closest to the problems at hand) if they require decisions relating particularly to local needs and which if done centrally, would prevent or limit desirable initiative and handicap the development of effective local leadership and responsibility.

In view of the respondents' preference that heads of schools should be granted major control over operational decisions, it will be very important for the Ministry to consider ways to ensure that proper checks and balances exist. There may be a need for exercising various means of greater control over heads to ensure a high degree of accountability. Peterson (1984) identified six mechanisms of administrative control over managers in educational organizations, four of which were hierarchical, one social and one extra-organizational. The four hierarchical controls were supervision, input control, behaviour control, and output control. These controls are in the form of organizational rules, procedures, and directives and in the form of evaluation, either through direct supervision or through the evaluation of outputs or results. The other two controls were selection-socialization and environmental control which have to do with need for community support. With regard to the selection-socialization, Ewanyshyn (1986, p. 187) suggested that attention might be given to re-examining criteria and procedures for the selection and evaluation of school administrators and implementing appropriate changes, including ongoing training programs. Each of these control mechanisms can be a constraint on the school administrators' work. Hence, it is important to note that attempts to maintain control, headquarters must afford heads enough autonomy to cope with unexpected problems or variable local conditions, while still keeping schools in line. In other words, policy makers should seek an appropriate balance of control and autonomy that will maximize the organizational effectiveness.

It may be increasingly important for the Ministry to ensure that educational goals and objectives are achieved through appropriate application and management of the available resources. However, schools must have discretion and authority to achieve results and then be held accountable for those results. The authority and discretion delegated to a school is said to enable the individual school to focus attention on issues central to improving the performance of its particular student population. Hence, accountability systems must clearly link rewards and incentives to student performance at the school level.

It is also important to ensure that the autonomy is well used, that each level contributes to the national goals of education. The notion of delegated authority seems largely incompatible with the maintenance of effective control. So central office faces the delicate task of controlling the behaviour of its units without restricting their autonomy unduly.

Other issues to be looked at would include the following: What are the consequences of high decentralization of control to the school level? What is the effect, if any, on students? What kind of monitoring and evaluation might be required? What unintended consequences might result? Are teachers expected to assume a greater role in school-based decision making?

Ewanyshyn (1986, p. 189) noted that "if a principal is wise in judiciously using the powers of office, he or she will actively seek the advice and guidance of all stakeholder groups. Of critical importance, the literature supports the participation of teachers in the decision-making process, whenever it is desirable." Yet the results of this study offer some support to the view of Meyer and Rowan (1983) that teacher autonomy is largely a myth, except in matters pertaining to the classroom. However, heads should be encouraged to share their power with stakeholder groups and to provide teachers with opportunities to participate in decision making, whenever it is desirable. As a caution, not an excuse for further decentralization, it is important to note that participative decision making increases responsibility and demands on time for administrators and teachers. Brown (1990) found that the leading weaknesses of decentralization related to the time demands. Therefore, there is a need for participative decision making to be implemented in a manner that does not produce work overloads.

Role for the REOs. Decentralized management highlights the changing roles of the REOs in relation to secondary school education. According to the results of this study, at the time of the study in 1994, the REOs were perceived to have control over payment for both services and equipment as well as provision of transport. Assuming that the inspectorate becomes fully functional, two of the roles for REOs which are probably most prominent in the implementation of the recent decentralization policy as far as government secondary schools are concerned include: (a) Bankers to schools. Most of the funds put at the disposal of the school are ledger entries at the REO which the REO transfers into and out of the school's budget share account. This is because of the need to put in and maintain financial control systems in schools. (b) Regulator of quality. The REOs are responsible for monitoring schools' performance and target attainment. According to Dixon (1991), in order to measure the effectiveness of a particular school, inspection and assessment form an important part of the system.

The current state of affairs especially in relation to the role of banker raises a number of issues. For example, will the REOs become more powerful? Is it desirable for the

REOs to accumulate so much control? Will centralized management emerge in a different context at the REOs level? If schools were to be entirely responsible for their finances, what monitoring procedures will be required and to whom would schools be accountable?

Educational administrators who were surveyed also indicated that they preferred that the REO should exercise control over staff salaries, appointment of teachers, in-service training, provision of furniture, location of a new school and type of school to be built. Respondents preferred that appointment of teachers and in-service training be retained as regional decisions based on guidelines from headquarters to provide uniformity within the country. Appointment of teachers by REOs may also be justified by a wish to prevent urban schools from attracting most teachers at the expense of rural schools.

Role of Ministry Headquarters. According to the findings on control over decisions, Malawi's decentralized management may be accompanied by significant changes in the roles of the ministry headquarters. Most operational issues are now to be left to REOs and schools themselves, with headquarters no longer directly in control. The decentralization policy curtailed some of the powers of headquarters as leader of the education services and planner of facilities and has, at best, brought about considerable change in how the relationship between the ministry and schools is to be defined. The ministry headquarters is expected to play a supportive role by providing all the assistance, support and advice that are needed by the REOs and schools to work towards achieving efficiency, effectiveness and excellence. Despite transferring powers over some operational decisions to REOs and heads of schools, the Ministry retained several important controls. According to the respondents the Ministry should retain control over the provision of funds to a school; building a new school; curriculum (content, examinations, instructional time); program evaluation; appointment of heads of schools; and national policies. As the government agent responsible for policy making, determining the size of the education budget and its allocation formula the ministry maintains considerable power in the leading and planning role. Accordingly, the Ministry is responsible for setting of educational priorities within the education system, as well as monitoring schools' performance and priority attainment. In this connection, ministry policies should give direction to lower levels and provide a framework for REOs and heads of schools to work with. It also has the responsibility to ensure that education services are provided on a fair and equitable basis to all students within the country.

The fact that the Ministry has retained major control over curriculum in the broader context also has far reaching implications. It provides the Ministry with a powerful but hidden instrument of control.

Implications for Theory

The findings of this study have a number of theoretical implications. The first implication has to do with change in educational organizations to improve efficiency. A number of writers on organizations have explored in depth the theme of change to decentralization. They suggest that "structure follows strategy" and organizations adapt to growth and new environments. They also report that size and age are positive factors in decentralization (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Hanson, 1979; Mintzberg, 1989). Set in the context of the literature, this study tends to support the view that educational organizations, like any other organizations, may go for fairly long periods of time with relatively little structural change but, with environmental changes and increase in size, the organization is forced to restructure.

Second, whenever decentralization of power, authority and influence takes place, it occurs at varying organizational levels. The literature indicated that shifts of power, authority and influence occur among educational organizations and within various organizational levels. The general understanding is that some decisions may be made best by central authorities, but others may best be left to those with professional expertise at the school level or those with a personal stake (Ewanyshyn, 1986; Elmore & McLaughlin, 1988; McNeil, 1986; Morphet, Johns & Reller, 1967; Scott, 1981; The World Bank, 1988).

Suggestions for Further Research

Since this study was considered as an interim review and assessment of progress with the implementation of the recent decentralization policy in Malawi, further research in the following areas is recommended.

1. A similar study of control over educational decisions as perceived by educational administrators at the end of the implementation stage should be undertaken. Such a study might be useful in two ways. First, the study should determine what changes have occurred with respect to the delegation of decisions pertaining to student and personnel management. Second, the study should test the findings from this study.

2. An investigation of the impact of the decentralized control over finances and related decisions might be undertaken to determine the changes that have occurred with respect to regional and institutional control. Related issues could also focus on financial equity, particularly to determine to what extent equity has been maintained and to disclose possible inequities among schools. Furthermore, studies might be undertaken to assess the outcomes and reveal possible unintended consequences of the decentralization policy.

Given the complexity of the decentralization process, a variety of criteria must be used to assess decentralization policies. The following are suggested:

1. The degree to which decentralization increases

administrative effectiveness, by promoting greater coordination among levels of the Ministry and between them and Ministry headquarters.

2. The degree to which decentralization contributes to promoting economic and managerial efficiency, by allowing the Ministry at both headquarters and lower levels to achieve educational goals in a more cost-effective manner.

3. The degree to which decentralization increases the Ministry's responsiveness to the needs and demands of various stakeholders, especially students.

4. The degree to which decentralization contributes to greater self-determination and self-reliance among lower levels of administration in promoting educational goals and meeting the students' needs.

5. The appropriateness of the means by which policies and programs are designed and carried out to achieve the goals of decentralization, however they are defined.

Assessing decentralization based on the degree to which power and responsibility have actually been transferred from headquarters to lower levels of the Ministry could lead to misleading conclusions. For example, the findings of this study indicate that despite attempts to decentralize a certain amount of educational planning and administration, the Ministry of Education in Malawi remains centralized. Although authority has been delegated to lower levels, they are not given the necessary resources to efficiently perform their new functions.

Conclusions and Personal Reflections

In search for equity and efficiency, Malawi developed a highly centralized system of public schooling. In seeking to improve efficiency and effectiveness, the government continues to trim down the central education bureaucracies and to divert power and authority in relation to operational matters to REOs and schools. Decentralization, as encountered in this study, was clearly the organizational form aimed at redressing the balance of power among different levels to improve efficiency; there was no evidence of the political form. In general, what is emerging in Malawi appears to be similar to the developments in the English education system as well as what the United States appears to be recommending.

The study is significant to the researcher for a number of reasons. First, it has enhanced the researcher's understanding of decentralization. In spite of the fact that decentralization can be seen as a management strategy for restructuring a school system to accomplish its goals more effectively and efficiently, it should not be seen as a panacea or an answer for all educational problems nor is it an end in itself. The study shows that decentralization is not a "quick fix" for the management problems of any system.

Second, the extent to which decentralization will achieve any objective depends on its degree and form. Each of the types of decentralization, namely deconcentration, delegation, devolution and privatization has both strengths and weaknesses. According to the findings of this study, ministry headquarters delegated certain powers to REOs and schools. The fact that powers were only delegated is significant because authorities at headquarters still has the right to withdraw them without major legislative changes. However, the most successful form will require the decentralization of authority, responsibility, and resources.

It is important to bear in mind that decentralization and centralization are not absolute concepts. Systems which are decentralized in some aspects are centralized in others, and that categorization is much more difficult than it appears at first sight. The nature of the task to be performed and the characteristics of the environment in which the organization operates determine the degree and type of decentralization that is appropriate.

Third, most of the objectives which decentralization is intended to achieve, such as improvement of efficiency and effectiveness in the management and administration of an organization, cannot be achieved by decentralization alone.

Decentralized educational management has a number of implications for flexibility of decision making, responsiveness to student needs, efficiency in the use of resources and accountability to the system's clients if successfully implemented. However, decentralization must be viewed more realistically, as one of a range of administrative or organizational strategies that may improve efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness under suitable conditions.

Fourth, decentralization can itself create new problems, the nature and extent of which depend on its degree and form and on factors specific to the country.

Finally, an attempt to unravel the complexities of the issue is further complicated by the difficulty of distinguishing between changes resulting (or not resulting) from decentralization and those attributed to other factors.

A number of conclusions emerges from the findings of the study. First, successful decentralization attempts require strong political and bureaucratic support, attitudes, and values within the organization that are conducive to decentralization, carefully designed programs that are implemented incrementally, and adequate investment of financial and human resources. Even when education reforms are successfully designed and implemented, however, they must be reinforced by careful training of the personnel involved and by resolve on the part of top officials in central offices to allow the reform to work as it was designed.

Second, effective management depends on strong and committed leadership. Leadership, in turn, depends heavily on the effective and appropriate use of authority. One important lesson from this study is that leadership and commitment are key factors in the success or failure of any change. Reforms must receive support from leaders in order to survive. This support must be more than formal or legal, it must be genuine and active.

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE ON EDUCATIONAL DECENTRALIZATION IN MALAWI

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. Parts A, C, D and E of the questionnaire refers to the whole educational system in Malawi.
2. Part B (Sections 1 and 2) refers to control over those educational decisions that affect government secondary schools in the country.
3. Please answer all questions.
4. Please read all the instructions carefully.
5. The questionnaire consists of five sections. The time required to complete all sections is approximately 60 minutes.
6. Some questions use a rating scale. For such questions please circle the number on the scale which most accurately describes your response.

   FOR EXAMPLE: 1 2 ③ 4 5
7. Following some of the questions, there is space provided for you to add further information or explanation.

YOUR CO-OPERATION IS VERY MUCH APPRECIATED

PART A - ORIGIN OF DECENTRALIZATION

In the last five years the Ministry of Education and Culture has adopted a more decentralized educational system. The change may have been influenced by a number of factors such as social, economic, political and technological factors.

In your opinion, how important were the following factors in influencing the introduction and development of more decentralized educational decision making in Malawi?

For each factor listed below please circle the number on a scale of 1 (Not important) to 5 (Very important).

	Factor	Rating Scale				
1.	The economic factors	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Changes in government policy.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Current administrative practices in Government.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	A desire for efficiency in the administration of education.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Concern with the effectiveness of educational administration.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Public pressure for greater accountability in education.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Pressure from Malawian teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	The increased size of the Ministry of Education and Culture.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Improvements in technology.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	The increased numbers of highly qualified secondary school teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	The improved calibre of administrative personnel in secondary schools.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Pressure from donors (e.g. World Bank).	1	2	3	4	5

List any other factors which you consider important or very important in influencing the introduction and development of more decentralized educational decision making in Malawi:

PART B - CONTROL OVER EDUCATIONAL DECISIONS AFFECTING GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOLS

SECTION 1

Following the implementation of the decentralized educational system in Malawi, Regional Educational Offices (REOs) and government secondary schools are expected to exercise more control over certain educational decisions. In the following items you are asked to indicate estimates of the degree of control which individuals or levels exert over certain educational decisions in relation to government secondary schools. For the purpose of this study, control over educational decisions refers to the power, authority and influence required to make a decision.

Your estimate of the degree of control can be indicated by circling one of the numbers on the graded scale, 1 2 3 4 5, where 1 indicates a negligible degree of control over making decisions of the nature and 5 indicates a high degree of control.

EXAMPLE:

Deciding the final grade awarded to a student in a given subject.	Ministry Headquarters	[✓ 1] 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	[✓ 1] 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 [✓ 3] 4 5
	Academic Departments	[✓ 1] 2 3 4 5
	Teacher (s)	1 2 3 4 [✓ 5]

This response indicates an opinion that teachers in government secondary schools have the major control over such a decision and Heads of schools have moderately high control perhaps because of their influence on school grading policy. In many of the situations, the actual degree of control may not be as clear cut as in the example used above. You are asked to give your best estimate for each decision item.

Section ONE of part B is attempting to assess perceptions of change in the degree of control over decision making in government secondary schools as a result of the recent government initiative to decentralized educational decision making. You are asked therefore, to make TWO estimates of the degree of control over decisions.

The FIRST is your recollection of the situation as it was before the recent decentralization reform of 1989/90.

The SECOND is your perception of the situation now (or currently), that is, after the 1989/90 reform.

EXAMPLE:

TYPE OF DECISION	LEVEL	DEGREE OF CONTROL Before 1989/90	CURRENTLY
Payment of salaries for secondary school and regional office staff.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 [✓ 5]	1 2 [✓ 3] 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	[✓ 1] 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 [✓ 5]
	Heads of Schools	[✓ 1] 2 3 4 5	[✓ 1] 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	[✓ 1] 2 3 4 5	[✓ 1] 2 3 4 5
	Teacher (s)	[✓ 1] 2 3 4 5	[✓ 1] 2 3 4 5

Increase or decrease in the degree of control over time should be indicated by differences in your responses for the two periods. If you perceive little or no change over the period, your responses in the two columns should be about the same.

Please indicate your estimates of the degree of control exerted by each level or individual over the decisions listed below (in relation to the secondary school system). Circle your responses for each period.

Code: 1: Negligible Degree of Control
2: Low Degree of Control
3: Moderate Degree of Control
4: Considerable Degree of Control
5: High Degree of Control

TYPE OF DECISION	LEVEL OR INDIVIDUAL	DEGREE OF CONTROL	
		Before 1989/90	CURRENTLY
Secondary School Finance and Budgeting			
1. Allocation of funds to a school	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
2. Staff Salaries	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
3. Payment for school equipment.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
4. Payment for services rendered to schools.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4
5. Distribution of expenditures within a school	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
6. Allocation of funds to a new instructional program	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

TYPE OF DECISION	LEVEL OR INDIVIDUAL	DEGREE OF CONTROL	
		Before 1989/90	CURRENTLY
7. Fund raising for a school	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
8. School fees.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
9. Boarding fees.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Capital Expenditures on Secondary Education			
1. Whether to build a new secondary school or not.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
2. The location of a new secondary school.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
3. What type of secondary school should be built.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
4. Whether an addition should be made to an existing secondary school or not.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Department	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
5. Renovation of a secondary school.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

TYPE OF DECISION	LEVEL OR INDIVIDUAL	DEGREE OF CONTROL	
		Before 1989/90	CURRENTLY
Equipment, Supplies and Services in Secondary Schools			
1. Maintenance of school buildings.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
2. Provision of furniture.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
3. Textbooks to be used in subject areas.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
4. Provision of library books.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
5. Provision of school supplies.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
6. Provision of school equipment.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
7. Provision of transport.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Curriculum and Instruction in Secondary Schools			
1. The methodology used in the classroom.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

TYPE OF DECISION	LEVEL OR INDIVIDUAL	DEGREE OF CONTROL	
		Before 1989/90	CURRENTLY
2. Extra-curricular activities.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
3. Co-ordination of instructional activities.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
4. Curriculum content for a subject area.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
5. Evaluating an instructional program.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Personnel Management in Secondary Schools			
1. The appointment of Heads of schools.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
2. The appointment of Heads of Department.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
3. Selection and posting of new teachers.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
4. Teaching assignments at a school.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

TYPE OF DECISION	LEVEL OR INDIVIDUAL	DEGREE OF CONTROL	
		Before 1989/90	CURRENTLY
5. Staff discipline.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
6. In-service training for teachers.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
7. Teacher evaluation procedures.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Student Management in Secondary Schools			
1. Standards for student conduct.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
2. Procedures for assessing student progress.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
3. Student progress reporting procedure.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
4. School discipline procedures.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
5. Expulsion of students.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

TYPE OF DECISION	LEVEL OR INDIVIDUAL	DEGREE OF CONTROL	
		Before 1989/90	CURRENTLY
6. J.C.E. examinations.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
7. M.C.E. examinations.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
8. Student promotions to the next form.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Organizational Structure in Secondary Schools			
1. The number of staff required in a school.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
2. Timetable or lesson schedule for a school.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
3. Minimum and maximum instructional time for each subject.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
4. Minimum and maximum class sizes in a school.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Secondary School Community Relations			
1. Involving parents and the community in school activities.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

TYPE OF DECISION	LEVEL OR INDIVIDUAL	DEGREE OF CONTROL	
		Before 1989/90	CURRENTLY
2. Relating to other schools and colleges.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
3. The use of a school building by community groups.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

Policy Making and Decision Making affecting Secondary Schools

1. School policies (professional development, field trips).	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Department	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
2. National school policies.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
3. School philosophy.	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

In the space provided below, (a) please list any other types of important educational decisions affecting government secondary schooling in Malawi and (b) for each type of decision estimate the degree of control as it was before the decentralization reform (1989/90), and the degree of control as you see it currently.

1. ____________________	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
2. ____________________	Ministry Headquarters	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Regional Educ. Office	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Heads of Schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Academic Departments	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
	Teacher(s)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

SECTION 2

For each item carefully CIRCLE the number that represents the individuals or levels which, in your opinion SHOULD exercise MAJOR control over the decision item in relation to government secondary schools in Malawi.

KEY: MHQ = Ministry Headquarters; REO = Regional Education Office; HOS= Heads of Schools; AD = Academic Department; T = Teachers.

EXAMPLE:

TYPE OF DECISION	LEVELS OF DECISION MAKING				
	MHQ	REOs	HOS	AD	T
Assignment of students to a particular secondary school.	[✓ 1]	2	3	4	5

This indicates that the respondent believes Ministry Headquarters should have the major control in assigning students to a particular school.

Please circle the number that represents the individual or level you believe SHOULD exercise MAJOR control over each of the following decision items in relation to government secondary schools:

TYPE OF DECISION	LEVELS OF DECISION MAKING				
	MHQ	REOs	HOS	AD	T
Secondary School Finance and Budgeting					
1. Allocation of funds to a school.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Staff salaries.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Payment for school equipment	1	2	3	4	5
4. Payment for services rendered to schools.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Distribution of expenditures within a school.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Allocation of funds to a new instructional program.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Fund raising for a school.	1	2	3	4	5
8. School fees.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Boarding fees.	1	2	3	4	5

TYPE OF DECISION	LEVELS OF DECISION MAKING				
	MHQ	REOs	HOS	AD	T
Capital Expenditures on Secondary Education					
1. Whether to build a new secondary school or not.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The location of a new secondary school.	1	2	3	4	5
3. What type of secondary school should be built.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Whether an addition should be made to an existing secondary school or not.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Renovation of a secondary school.	1	2	3	4	5
Equipment, Supplies and Services for Secondary Schools					
1. Maintenance of school buildings.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Provision of furniture.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Textbooks to be used in subject areas.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Provision of library books.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Provision of school supplies.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Provision of school equipment.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Provision of transport.	1	2	3	4	5
Secondary School Curriculum and Instruction					
1. The methodology used in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Extra-curricular activities.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Co-ordination of instructional activities.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Curriculum content for a subject area.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Evaluating an instructional program.	1	2	3	4	5

TYPE OF DECISION	LEVELS OF DECISION MAKING				
	MHQ	REOs	HOS	AD	T
Secondary School Personnel Management					
1. The appointment of Heads of schools.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The appointment of Heads of Departments.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Selection and posting of new teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Teaching assignments at a school.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Staff discipline.	1	2	3	4	5
6. In-service training for teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Teacher evaluation procedures.	1	2	3	4	5
Secondary School Student Management					
1. Standards for student conduct.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Procedures for assessing student progress.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Student progress reporting procedure.	1	2	3	4	5
4. School discipline procedures.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Expulsion of students.	1	2	3	4	5
6. J.C. E. examinations.	1	2	3	4	5
7. M.C.E. examinations.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Student promotions to the next form.	1	2	3	4	5
Organizational Structure in Secondary Schools					
1. The number of staff required in a school.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Timetable or lesson schedule for a school.	1	2	3	4	5

TYPE OF DECISION	LEVELS OF DECISION MAKING				
	MHQ	REOs	HOS	AD	T
3. Minimum and maximum instructional time for each subject.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Minimum and maximum class sizes in a school.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The number of departments in the school	1	2	3	4	5
Secondary School Community Relations					
1. Involving parents and the community in school activities.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Relating to other schools and colleges.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The use of a school building by community groups.	1	2	3	4	5
Policy Making and Decision Making affecting Secondary Schools					
1. School policies (professional development, field trips).	1	2	3	4	5
2. National school policies.	1	2	3	4	5
3. School philosophy.	1	2	3	4	5

In the space provided below, (a) please list any other types of important educational decisions affecting government secondary schooling in Malawi, and (b) for each type of decision indicate, by circling the appropriate number, which individual or group you believe SHOULD exercise Major control.

1. __________________________	1	2	3	4	5
2. __________________________	1	2	3	4	5
3. __________________________	1	2	3	4	5

PART C - BENEFITS OF DECENTRALIZATION

For each potential benefit listed below please circle the number on a scale of 1 (not a benefit) to 5 (major benefit) which indicates the extent to which you perceive it to be an actual benefit of Malawi's efforts at decentralizing educational decision making.

1. Ensures better allocation of resources to schools.
Not a benefit Major benefit
1 2 3 4 5

2. Provides more opportunity for lower level administrators to participate in administrative decision making.
Not a benefit Major benefit
1 2 3 4 5

3. Promotes better accountability for decisions made.
Not a benefit Major benefit
1 2 3 4 5

4. Motivates new leaders at all levels of education.
Not a benefit Major benefit
1 2 3 4 5

5. Improves responsiveness to local needs.
Not a benefit Major benefit
1 2 3 4 5

6. Increases responsiveness to staff personnel needs.
Not a benefit Major benefit
1 2 3 4 5

7. Provides greater attention to staff development.
Not a benefit Major benefit
1 2 3 4 5

8. Increases responsiveness by headquarters staff.
Not a benefit Major benefit
1 2 3 4 5

9. Stimulates instructional improvement.
Not a benefit Major benefit
1 2 3 4 5

10. Provides clearer division of roles between headquarters and schools.
Not a benefit Major benefit
1 2 3 4 5

11. Provides flexibility in the allocation of resources within the school.
Not a benefit Major benefit
1 2 3 4 5

12. Promotes more efficient use of school resources.
Not a benefit Major benefit
1 2 3 4 5

13. Improves student academic achievement.
Not a benefit Major benefit
1 2 3 4 5

14. Fosters development of managerial skills in lower level personnel.
Not a benefit Major benefit
1 2 3 4 5

15. Enhances staff morale and motivation.
Not a benefit Major benefit
1 2 3 4 5

16. Strengthens the quality of planning process.
Not a benefit Major benefit
1 2 3 4 5

17. Recognizes the expertise and competence of those who work in secondary schools.
Not a benefit Major benefit
1 2 3 4 5

18. Improves communication in the system.
Not a benefit Major benefit
1 2 3 4 5

19. Brings financial and instructional resources in line with the instructional goals.
Not a benefit Major benefit
1 2 3 4 5

20. Gives schools more authority to control educational resources.
Not a benefit Major benefit
1 2 3 4 5

21. Frees the top officials from routine administrative matters.
Not a benefit Major benefit
1 2 3 4 5

22. Delegates decision making to those who have responsibility for implementing the decisions.
Not a benefit Major benefit
1 2 3 4 5

Please list any other benefit(s) you believe have accrued from Malawi's efforts to decentralized educational decision making.

____

____

PART D - PROBLEMS OF DECENTRALIZATION

For each potential problem below, please circle the number which indicates the extent to which you perceive it to be an actual problem associated with Malawi's efforts at decentralizing educational decision making.

1. Resource unavailability or insufficiency.
   Not a problem Major Problem
   1 2 3 4 5

2. Insufficient and unclear implementation procedures.
   Not a problem Major Problem
   1 2 3 4 5

3. Uncertainty regarding the new roles and responsibilities administrators at different educational levels are expected to assume.
   Not a problem Major Problem
   1 2 3 4 5

4. Constraints caused by centrally determined rules and regulations.
   Not a problem Major Problem
   1 2 3 4 5

5. Lack of self-confidence on the part of all parties involved in decision making.
   Not a problem Major Problem
   1 2 3 4 5

6. Lack of ability and expertise at lower levels of the Ministry to exercise proper control.
   Not a problem Major Problem
   1 2 3 4 5

7. Inadequate positive incentives for the people expected to play a leading role.
   Not a problem Major Problem
   1 2 3 4 5

8. Lower level administrators not receiving adequate education on the new system.
   Not a problem Major Problem
   1 2 3 4 5

9. The Ministry not being ready to fully implement the new system.
   Not a problem Major Problem
   1 2 3 4 5

10. Devising allocation formulae which are truly equitable.
Not a problem Major Problem
1 2 3 4 5

11. Increased responsibility and time demands for REOs, headmasters and headmistresses.
Not a problem Major Problem
1 2 3 4 5

12. Lack of extensive preparation and pilot programs.
Not a problem Major Problem
1 2 3 4 5

13. Lack of a system to monitor successes and problems with implementation.
Not a problem Major Problem
1 2 3 4 5

14. Magnitude of the decentralization effort.
Not a problem Major Problem
1 2 3 4 5

15. Suddenness of the decentralization effort.
Not a problem Major Problem
1 2 3 4 5

16. Lack of commitment by senior administrators to the realities of decentralization.
Not a problem Major Problem
1 2 3 4 5

17. Inadequate organizational infrastructures for communication between and among the Ministry, Regional Offices and schools.
Not a problem Major Problem
1 2 3 4 5

18. Reluctance by the Ministry to delegate the planning function to the regional level.
Not a problem Major Problem
1 2 3 4 5

Please list any other problem(s) you believe have occurred as a result of Malawi's efforts to decentralize educational decision making.

PART E - SUGGESTIONS

In the space provided below, write down five suggestions you consider critical for enhancing the effectiveness of the decentralization policy in Malawi.

1. ____

2. ____

3. ____

4. ____

5. ____

PART F - DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please CIRCLE the appropriate response (number) or fill in the blank.

1. Your position:
    1. Ministry Headquarters administrator
    2. Methods Advisor
    3. Regional office administrator
    4. Regional Subject Inspector
    5. Headmaster or Headmistress

2. Your Gender:
    1. Female 2. Male

3. Years in Present Position: ________________.

4. Highest level of Formal Education:
    1. Diploma
    2. Bachelor's Degree
    3. Master's Degree
    4. Doctorate

5. Total years of administrative and/or inspectorial experience (include this school year): __________________.

6. FOR HEADMASTERS & HEADMISTRESSES ONLY.
    Type of School:
    1. Boarding Secondary School
    2. Day Secondary School

7. FOR HEADMASTERS & HEADMISTRESSES ONLY.
    Enrolment of School: __________________.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE !!!!

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire Covering Letter

March 29, 1994

Dear Sir/Madame

I have been granted permission by the Ministry of Education and Culture to undertake a research project on the decentralized educational reform. The study will serve to meet the requirements of a doctoral program in the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada. In this regard, the enclosed questionnaire has been developed to gather information about the origin, nature, perceived benefits and problems of the decentralized educational system in Malawi.

As an educational administrator, you are considered to be in a key position to respond to this questionnaire and your input will be of vital importance. Realizing that there are many demands on your time, the questionnaire has been designed so that it may be completed in about 60 minutes. With your cooperation, this research study may contribute to the improvement of policies affecting educational decision making in Malawi. Your voluntary cooperation will therefore be greatly appreciated. The questionnaire may be completed and returned in the enclosed, stamped and self-addressed envelope any time prior to June 1, 1994.

Please note that research information provided will be treated as confidential. Your name is not required on the questionnaire. The information will be aggregated and reported for groups rather than for individuals.

If you would like further information on the study please contact me or Dr. E.W. Ratsoy at the above address or Mr. C. M. Gunsaru at the Ministry of Education and Culture Headquarters.
Your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

C.D. Nsaliwa

C. Dr. E.W. Ratsoy, (Supervisor), Chairman, Department of Educational Administration,University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada.
C. The Principal Secretary, Ministry of Education and Culture, Private Bag 328, Lilongwe 3, Malawi, Central Africa.
C. Mr C. M. Gunsaru, Ministry of Education and Culture, Private Bag 328, Lilongwe 3, Malawi, Central Africa.

APPENDIX C

Letter Seeking Permission to Undertake Reseach

February 24, 1994.

The Principal Secretary
Ministry of Education and Culture
Private Bag 328
Capital City, Lilongwe 3
Malawi
Central Africa.

Dear Sir,

Permission to Undertake a Research Project

Review of the literature indicates sustained interest in both developed and developing countries in decentralization as a means of educational reform. It is pleasing to note that our educational system in Malawi is in the process of implementing a decentralization reform. Hence, during my studies in educational administration here, at the University of Alberta, I have developed a keen interest in educational decentralization and have decided to make it a focus of my dissertation research.

I therefore, humbly request your permission to undertake a research study on educational decentralization in Malawi. Attached is an outline of the proposed research for your consideration Sir. Should you require any further information regarding the proposed study, I would be pleased to forward this to you.

The study will serve to meet the requirements of a doctoral program in the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada.

I will be very grateful if you would give this matter your earliest attention Sir. I hope to hear from you in the near future. Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

C.D. Nsaliwa

cc: Dr. E.W. Ratsoy (Advisor), Department of Educational Administration, University of Alberta.

APPENDIX D

Permission from the Ministry

In reply please quote No. ....

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE
PRIVATE BAG 328
CAPITAL CITY
LILONGWE 3
MALAWI

Telegrams: MINED LILONGWE
Telephone: Lilongwe 784 800
Fax No.: 782 873

Communications should be addressed to:
The Secretary for Education and Culture

16th December 1993

Mrs C. Nsaliwa,

Permission to Carry out a Reseach

I write to inform you that you can come to do your research here. But send us your research proposal so that we process clearance with Management.

I hope you are fine.

S. V. Chamdimba
SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION

APPENDIX E

Letter Seeking Approval and Support for the Research Proposal

February 24, 1994.

The Principal Secretary,
Ministry of Education and Culture
Private Bag 328, Capital City, Lilongwe 3
Malawi, Central Africa.

APPROVAL AND SUPPORT OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH PROJECT

Dear Sir,

Thank you so much for granting me permission to undertake a research project on the recent policy of decentralization.

Please find enclosed an outline for the proposed research project and a copy of the proposal for your approval.

Apart from addressing a very important and timely educational issue, this study has practical significance for the Government of Malawi. The practical significance of this study relates to its potential for informing policy makers as to both the nature of the issues related to the implementation of the decentralization reform, and the implications of those issues for educational administrators. Such an endeavour may be timely, because the reform was only recently adopted. This study will provide a conceptual framework from which to identify concerns in formulating future educational policies in relation to control over decision making.

The results of this study will be of interest to the Ministry of Education and Culture in assessing the perceived impact of the decision to decentralize more decision functions to lower levels of the organization. This study will provide information which will assist educational administrators in assessing whether the optimism reported and advantages articulated by scholars in other countries are applicable in Malawi.

The findings will appraise policy makers of possible role conflicts due to discrepancies between actual and preferred degree of control. To the degree that changes in administrative structures and processes are needed, hopefully the findings will be useful in stimulating such changes.

I would be very grateful for a letter approving and supporting the study.

Yours sincerely

C.D. Nsaliwa

cc: Dr. E.W. Ratsoy (Advisor), Department of Educational Administration, University of Alberta.

APPENDIX F

Letter of Approval and Support

Telegrams: MINED LILONGWE
Telephone: Lilongwe 784 800
Fax No.: 782 873

Communications should be addressed to:
The Secretary for Education and Culture

In reply please quote No. DP6/3/5/19

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE
PRIVATE BAG 328
CAPITAL CITY
LILONGWE 3
MALAWI

18th April, 1994

Mrs. C.D. Msaliwa,
Department of Educational Administration,
Faculty of Education,
University of Alberta,
Edmonton.
CANADA

APPROVAL AND SUPPORT OF A RESEARCH PROJECT

I am pleased to inform you that permission has been granted for you to undertake a Research Project on the recent policy of decentralization in Malawi's Ministry of Education.

Your proposed research is timely and will be beneficial to the Government of Malawi.

The Ministry will support it by providing technical advice, study space, distribution of the questionaire and any other assistance which will facilitate your research work here.

We look forward to your coming back for the research work.

Yours faithfully,

S.V. Chamdimba
for : SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION

cc : Dr. E.W. Ratsoy (Advisor)
Department of Educational Administration,
University of Alberta.

APPENDIX G

Means of all Respondenses Before 1989/90 and 1994

Means of All Responses Before 1989/90 and 1994

CODE: 1: (Negligible) ————————> 5: (Major) Degree of Control

TYPE OF DECISION	LEVEL	MEAN CONTROL Before 1989/90	1994	DIFFERENCE
Secondary School Finance and Budgeting				
1. Allocation of funds to a school	Ministry Headquarters	4.95	4.12	-0.83
	Regional Educ. Office	1.53	3.18	1.65
	Heads of Schools	1.69	3.61	1.92
	Academic Departments	1.29	2.22	0.93
	Teacher(s)	1.18	1.72	0.54
2. Staff Salaries	Ministry Headquarters	4.92	4.36	-0.56
	Regional Educ. Office	1.53	3.05	1.52
	Heads of Schools	1.40	1.58	0.18
	Academic Departments	1.08	1.11	0.03
	Teacher(s)	1.14	1.17	0.03
3. Payment for school equipment	Ministry Headquarters	4.68	3.56	-1.12
	Regional Educ. Office	2.00	3.77	1.77
	Heads of Schools	1.91	3.47	1.58
	Academic Departments	1.12	1.49	0.37
	Teacher(s)	1.06	1.20	0.14
4. Payment for services rendered to schools	Ministry Headquarters	4.92	2.92	-2.00
	Regional Educ. Office	2.06	4.00	1.94
	Heads of Schools	1.83	3.90	1.07
	Academic Departments	1.11	1.53	0.42
	Teacher(s)	1.06	1.24	0.18
5. Distribution of expenditures within a school	Ministry Headquarters	3.92	2.44	-1.48
	Regional Educ. Office	1.52	2.49	0.97
	Heads of Schools	3.11	4.60	1.49
	Academic Departments	1.80	2.82	1.02
	Teacher(s)	1.24	2.12	0.88
6. Allocation of funds to a new instructional program	Ministry Headquarters	4.87	4.67	-0.20
	Regional Educ. Office	1.71	2.51	0.80
	Heads of Schools	1.29	2.24	0.95
	Academic Departments	1.09	1.68	0.59
	Teacher(s)	1.09	1.60	0.51
7. Fund raising for a school	Ministry Headquarters	2.80	2.47	-0.33
	Regional Educ. Office	1.27	1.91	0.64
	Heads of Schools	3.42	3.95	0.53
	Academic Departments	2.11	2.54	0.43
	Teacher(s)	2.06	2.44	0.38

TYPE OF DECISION	LEVEL	MEAN CONTROL Before 1989/90	 1994	DIFFERENCE
8. School fees	Ministry Headquarters	4.67	4.47	-0.20
	Regional Educ. Office	1.34	1.78	0.44
	Heads of Schools	2.00	2.20	0,20
	Academic Departments	1.13	1.27	0.14
	Teacher(s)	1.13	1.27	0.14
9. Boarding fees	Ministry Headquarters	3.88	3.90	0.02
	Regional Educ. Office	1.27	1.89	0.62
	Heads of Schools	3.03	3.44	0.41
	Academic Departments	1.26	1.26	0.00
	Teacher(s)	1.34	1.36	0.02
Capital Expenditures on Secondary Education				
1. Whether to build a new secondary school or not	Ministry Headquarters	4.97	4.97	0.00
	Regional Educ. Office	1.37	1.74	0.37
	Heads of Schools	1.06	1.14	0.08
	Academic Departments	1.00	1.00	0.00
	Teacher(s)	1.00	1.00	0.00
2. The location of a new secondary school	Ministry Headquarters	4.76	4.68	-0.08
	Regional Educ. Office	2.58	3.23	0.65
	Heads of Schools	1.08	1.17	0.09
	Academic Departments	1.03	1.03	0.00
	Teacher(s)	1.03	1.00	-0.03
3. What type of secondary school should be built	Ministry Headquarters	5.00	4.97	-0.03
	Regional Educ. Office	2.08	2.37	0.29
	Heads of Schools	1.08	1.14	0.06
	Academic Departments	1.03	1.06	0.03
	Teacher(s)	1.00	1.00	0.00
4. Whether an addition should be made to an existing secondary school or not	Ministry Headquarters	4.95	4.90	-0.05
	Regional Educ. Office	1.89	2.47	0.59
	Heads of Schools	1.64	1.94	0.30
	Academic Department	1.09	1.31	0.22
	Teacher(s)	1.09	1.18	0.09
5. Renovation of a secondary school	Ministry Headquarters	4.63	4.63	0.00
	Regional Educ. Office	2.11	3.17	1.06
	Heads of Schools	2.42	3.32	0.90
	Academic Departments	1.29	1.66	0.37
	Teacher(s)	1.26	1.58	0.32
Equipment, Supplies and Services in Secondary Schools				
1. Maintenance of school buildings	Ministry Headquarters	4.71	3.94	-0.77
	Regional Educ. Office	1.85	3.12	1.27
	Heads of Schools	2.09	3.87	1.78
	Academic Departments	1.11	1.54	0.43
	Teacher(s)	1.09	1.46	0.37

TYPE OF DECISION	LEVEL	MEAN CONTROL		DIFFERENCE
		Before 1989/90	1994	
2. Provision of furniture	Ministry Headquarters	4.95	4.62	-0.33
	Regional Educ. Office	2.00	3.52	1.51
	Heads of Schools	1.94	2.83	0.89
	Academic Departments	1.18	1.63	0.55
	Teacher(s)	1.19	1.43	0.24
3. Textbooks to be used in subject areas	Ministry Headquarters	4.87	4.24	-0.63
	Regional Educ. Office	1.68	2.27	0.59
	Heads of Schools	2.40	3.40	1.00
	Academic Departments	2.61	3.36	0.65
	Teacher(s)	2.49	3.11	0.62
4. Provision of library books	Ministry Headquarters	4.83	4.31	-0.52
	Regional Educ. Office	1.42	2.15	0.73
	Heads of Schools	2.27	3.46	1.19
	Academic Departments	1.88	2.69	0.81
	Teacher(s)	1.76	2.37	0.61
5. Provision of school supplies	Ministry Headquarters	4.33	3.39	-0.94
	Regional Educ. Office	1.91	3.15	1.24
	Heads of Schools	2.91	4.27	1.36
	Academic Departments	1.84	2.79	1.47
	Teacher(s)	1.53	2.39	0.86
6. Provision of school equipment	Ministry Headquarters	4.86	3.94	-0.92
	Regional Educ. Office	1.77	3.22	1.45
	Heads of Schools	2.49	3.76	1.27
	Academic Departments	1.61	2.62	1.01
	Teacher(s)	1.32	2.11	0.79
7. Provision of transport	Ministry Headquarters	4.84	3.94	-0.90
	Regional Educ. Office	2.09	4.03	1.94
	Heads of Schools	1.70	3.74	2.04
	Academic Departments	1.15	1.41	0.26
	Teacher(s)	1.09	1.18	0.09
Curriculum and Instruction in Secondary Schools				
1. The methodology used in the classroom	Ministry Headquarters	4.33	4.11	-0.22
	Regional Educ. Office	1.47	1.77	0.30
	Heads of Schools	2.76	3.00	0.24
	Academic Departments	2.97	3.50	0.53
	Teacher(s)	3.67	3.97	0.30
2. Extra-curricular activities	Ministry Headquarters	2.14	2.09	-0.05
	Regional Educ. Office	1.33	1.49	0.16
	Heads of Schools	4.24	4.50	0.26
	Academic Departments	3.23	3.49	0.26
	Teacher(s)	3.87	4.24	0.37

TYPE OF DECISION	LEVEL	MEAN CONTROL		DIFFERENCE
		Before 1989/90	1994	
3. Co-ordination of instructional activities	Ministry Headquarters	3.76	3.70	-0.06
	Regional Educ. Office	2.23	2.74	0.51
	Heads of Schools	4.18	4.32	0.14
	Academic Departments	3.74	4.14	0.40
	Teacher(s)	2.94	3.09	0.15
4. Curriculum content for a subject area	Ministry Headquarters	4.68	4.68	0.00
	Regional Educ. Office	1.58	1.94	0.36
	Heads of Schools	2.35	2.50	0.15
	Academic Departments	2.52	2.91	0.39
	Teacher(s)	2.64	2.94	0.30
5. Evaluating an instructional program	Ministry Headquarters	4.71	4.69	-0.02
	Regional Educ. Office	2.13	2.75	0.62
	Heads of Schools	3.12	3.27	0.15
	Academic Departments	2.79	3.23	0.44
	Teacher(s)	2.85	3.24	0.39
Personnel Management in Secondary Schools				
1. The appointment of Heads of schools	Ministry Headquarters	4.85	4.87	0.02
	Regional Educ. Office	1.68	2.14	0.46
	Heads of Schools	1.28	1.38	0.10
	Academic Departments	1.06	1.08	0.02
	Teacher(s)	1.00	1.00	0.00
2. The appointment of Heads of Department	Ministry Headquarters	2.21	3.54	1.33
	Regional Educ. Office	1.32	1.44	0.12
	Heads of Schools	4.06	3.50	-0.56
	Academic Departments	1.58	1.58	0.00
	Teacher(s)	1.59	1.63	0.04
3. Selection and posting of new teachers	Ministry Headquarters	4.97	4.97	0.00
	Regional Educ. Office	1.84	2.42	0.58
	Heads of Schools	1.65	1.97	0.28
	Academic Departments	1.32	1.35	0.03
	Teacher(s)	1.08	1.08	0.00
4. Teaching assignments at a school	Ministry Headquarters	1.92	2.06	0.14
	Regional Educ. Office	1.34	1.49	0.15
	Heads of Schools	4.47	4.59	0.12
	Academic Departments	3.12	3.79	0.67
	Teacher(s)	2.35	2.81	0.53
5. Staff discipline	Ministry Headquarters	4.73	4.49	-0.24
	Regional Educ. Office	2.31	3.22	0.89
	Heads of Schools	4.19	4.46	0.27
	Academic Departments	2.11	2.43	0.32
	Teacher(s)	1.41	1.41	0.00

TYPE OF DECISION	LEVEL	MEAN CONTROL Before 1989/90	 1994	DIFFERENCE
6. In-service training for teachers	Ministry Headquarters	4.95	4.92	-0.03
	Regional Educ. Office	1.83	2.64	0.79
	Heads of Schools	1.89	2.60	0.71
	Academic Departments	1.47	2.06	0.59
	Teacher(s)	1.20	1.37	0.17
7. Teacher evaluation procedures	Ministry Headquarters	4.82	4.72	-0.10
	Regional Educ. Office	2.00	2.87	0.87
	Heads of Schools	3.14	3.74	0.60
	Academic Departments	2.11	2.87	0.76
	Teacher(s)	1.39	1.65	0.26
Student Management in Secondary Schools				
1. Standards for student conduct	Ministry Headquarters	3.94	3.83	-0.11
	Regional Educ. Office	2.06	2.61	0.55
	Heads of Schools	4.31	4.56	0.25
	Academic Departments	2.85	3.09	0.24
	Teacher(s)	3.06	3.30	0.24
2. Procedures for assessing student progress	Ministry Headquarters	2.43	2.37	-0.06
	Regional Educ. Office	1.51	1.54	0.03
	Heads of Schools	4.36	4.56	0.20
	Academic Departments	3.97	4.14	0.17
	Teacher(s)	4.41	4.51	0.10
3. Student progress reporting procedure	Ministry Headquarters	2.25	2.15	-0.10
	Regional Educ. Office	1.28	1.52	0.24
	Heads of Schools	4.61	4.75	0.14
	Academic Departments	3.68	3.86	0.18
	Teacher(s)	3.65	3.91	0.26
4. School discipline procedures	Ministry Headquarters	4.43	4.38	-0.05
	Regional Educ. Office	2.23	2.74	0.51
	Heads of Schools	4.19	4.65	0.46
	Academic Departments	2.72	3.09	0.37
	Teacher(s)	3.19	3.42	0.23
5. Expulsion of students	Ministry Headquarters	5.00	5.00	0.00
	Regional Educ. Office	1.54	1.89	0.35
	Heads of Schools	2.97	3.22	0.25
	Academic Departments	1.72	1.77	0.05
	Teacher(s)	1,89	2.03	0.14

TYPE OF DECISION	LEVEL	MEAN CONTROL		DIFFERENCE
		Before 1989/90	1994	
6. J.C.E. examinations	Ministry Headquarters	4.72	3.81	-0.89
	Regional Educ. Office	1.68	1.61	-0.07
	Heads of Schools	2.20	2.21	0.01
	Academic Departments	1.69	1.68	-0.01
	Teacher(s)	1.89	1.82	-0.07
7. M.C.E. examinations	Ministry Headquarters	3.83	3.83	0.00
	Regional Educ. Office	1.56	1.66	0.10
	Heads of Schools	2.20	2.31	0.11
	Academic Departments	1.77	1.86	0.09
	Teacher(s)	1.89	1.89	0.00
8. Student promotions to the next form	Ministry Headquarters	3.03	3.08	0.05
	Regional Educ. Office	1.27	1.28	0.01
	Heads of Schools	3.75	3.75	0.00
	Academic Departments	3.00	3.08	0.08
	Teacher(s)	3.24	3.33	0.09
Organizational Structure in Secondary Schools				
1. The number of staff required in a school	Ministry Headquarters	4.84	4.84	0.00
	Regional Educ. Office	1.77	2.34	0.57
	Heads of Schools	3.03	3.39	0.36
	Academic Departments	2.06	2.33	0.27
	Teacher(s)	1.44	1.64	0.20
2. Timetable or lesson schedule for a school	Ministry Headquarters	2.77	2.80	0.03
	Regional Educ. Office	1.40	1.40	0.00
	Heads of Schools	4.76	4.79	0.03
	Academic Departments	3.72	3.87	0.15
	Teacher(s)	2.83	2.97	0.14
3. Minimum and maximum instructional time for each subject	Ministry Headquarters	5.00	5.00	0.00
	Regional Educ. Office	1.38	1.50	0.12
	Heads of Schools	2.05	2.19	0.14
	Academic Departments	1.49	1.60	0.11
	Teacher(s)	1.31	1.37	0.06
4. Minimum and maximum class sizes in a school	Ministry Headquarters	4.90	4.84	-0.06
	Regional Educ. Office	1.59	1.78	0.20
	Heads of Schools	2.25	2.62	0.37
	Academic Departments	1.60	1.73	0.13
	Teacher(s)	1.46	1.51	0.05
Secondary School Community Relations				
1. Involving parents and the community in school activities	Ministry Headquarters	1.97	1.92	-0.05
	Regional Educ. Office	1.81	1.94	0.13
	Heads of Schools	4.42	4.53	0.11
	Academic Departments	2.14	2.31	0.27
	Teacher(s)	2.32	2.61	0.29

TYPE OF DECISION	LEVEL	MEAN CONTROL Before 1989/90	1994	DIFFERENCE
2. Relating to other schools and colleges	Ministry Headquarters	2.03	2.03	0.00
	Regional Educ. Office	1.57	1.79	0.22
	Heads of Schools	4.61	4.79	0.18
	Academic Departments	2.91	3.05	0.14
	Teacher(s)	2.70	2.82	0.12
3. The use of a school building by community groups	Ministry Headquarters	3.00	2.43	-0.57
	Regional Educ. Office	1.59	1.85	0.26
	Heads of Schools	4.68	4.90	0.22
	Academic Departments	2.03	2.17	0.14
	Teacher(s)	1.83	2.06	0.23
Policy Making and Decision Making affecting Secondary Schools				
1. School policies (professional development, field trips)	Ministry Headquarters	4.53	4.51	-0.02
	Regional Educ. Office	2.15	2.74	0.59
	Heads of Schools	3.06	3.66	0.60
	Academic Department	2.25	2.51	0.26
	Teacher(s)	2.06	2.22	0.16
2. National school policies	Ministry Headquarters	5.00	5.00	0.00
	Regional Educ. Office	1.97	2.86	0.89
	Heads of Schools	1.67	2.03	0.36
	Academic Departments	1.37	1.51	0.14
	Teacher(s)	1.20	1.37	0.17
3. School philosophy	Ministry Headquarters	3.15	3.15	0.00
	Regional Educ. Office	1.84	2.03	0.19
	Heads of Schools	4.06	4.17	0.11
	Academic Departments	3.00	3.12	0.12
	Teacher(s)	3.09	3.21	0.12

APPENDIX H

Respondents' Suggestions for Improvement

Respondents' Suggestions for Enhancing the Effectiveness of the Educational Decentralization Policy in Malawi

Provision of clear guidelines.

Commitment to decentralization / willingness to delegate.

Adequate allocation of financial resources by government - (eg. for in-service training) - school board to be given authority to raise funds for their institutions.

Adequate qualified human resources to cope with increased volume of work especially at REO level and school levels.

Delegate greater autonomy to REOs and heads of institutions.

Full involvement of heads in the preparation of institutional budgets.

More education on decentralization policy at all levels - train administrators at all levels in their new roles - heads of schools to exchange experiences.

Involvement of juniors in decision making.

Establishment of a monitoring system / strict procedures for monitoring financial management and control procedures.

Need for a management information system - computers.

Incentives and career path for majority of teachers/managers.

Adequate equipment and vehicles.

Need for office accommodation and houses.

Provision of support mechanisms for lower level personnel.

Immediate deployment of regional inspection of schools and heads of departments.

Mid-term transfers of teachers to be stopped as they disrupts a number of activities.

Lack of technology to go with decentralization process.

Strong TAM.

The system may be centralized elsewhere... REO or Heads office.

Decentralized responsibilities have to go hand in hand with promotions to minimize problems in the implementation of certain decisions.

Policy objectives must be clearly stated and communicated.

Good communication between headquarters and lower levels.

Clear and open communication channels.

Decisions taken at a lower level must be "closed".

Top officials to be pragmatic and sincere.

Promotion to top positions to be based on merit.

Willingness of top administrators to relinquish authority over operational issues to REOs and heads.

Proper follow ups on how effective the system is operating.

Decision levels should be communicated to institutions explicitly.

Heads of departments to be involved in decision making at the school level.

More functions to be decentralized to the school level.

On going research and evaluation of the decentralization policy.

Placing personnel in their rightful positions

policy.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Christina Doris Nsaliwa

Academic Background

Master of Arts in Human Ecology, 1992, Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

Bachelor of Human Ecology, 1991, Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

Master of Education, 1985, University of Birmingham, England

Diploma in Home Economics Education, 1984, Moray House College of Education, Edinburgh, Scotland

Diploma in Education, 1972, University of Malawi, Blantyre, Malawi.

Professional Experience

1990 to 1991 - Graduate Teaching Assistant at Mount Saint Vincent University

1992 to 1993 - Graduate Research Assistant at the University of Alberta

1993 to date - Graduate Teaching Assistant at the University of Alberta

1982 to 1988 - Inspector of Schools for Home Economics: (Supervision, Curriculum Development, Staff Development, Examinations)

1972 to 1982 - Taught Home Economics and Biology at Malosa Secondary School, Thyolo Secondary School and Likuni Girls Secondary School in Malawi

Awards and Scholarships

1983 to 1985 - British Council Scholarship

1988 to 1992 - Africa 2000 Scholarship for Women (Association of the Universities and Colleges of Canada)

1992 to 1996 - Mount Saint Vincent University - University of Malawi Link (Canadian International Development Association Scholarship)

1991 - President's Prize, Bachelor of Human Ecology, Mount Saint Vincent University

1992 - Senate Medal of Distinction, Master of Arts in Human Ecology, Mount Saint Vincent University.